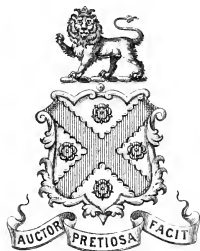


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THE
DAY OF ADVERSITY.
REFLECTIONS,
SUITED TO
THE HOUR OF SORROW,
THE BED OF SICKNESS,
OR, THE
LOSS OF BELOVED RELATIVES.

BY THE
REV. BASIL WOODD, M. A

In the day of adversity consider.—*Ecc.* iv. 14.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY,
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This little Tract was drawn up with a design of being left at the house of Adversity, as a means of strengthening the hints which might be suggested by a Pastoral Visit.

The chief attention has therefore been paid to plainness and simplicity of truth and language—in the hope that it might be acceptable to a mind softened by affliction, and especially to those who seldom, but in affliction, think of God.

In the use of the Prayers at the end of this Tract, the words we, I, us, me, Brother, Sister, &c. must be introduced at discretion.



THE DAY OF ADVERSITY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE are commanded by the word of God to remember those who suffer adversity. It has pleased God, who ordereth all events, to visit you with affliction; and I hope you will give me credit when I assure you, that I feel for you, and that I remember you in my prayers to God, that of His great mercy he will comfort and support you; that He will make this affliction a blessing to your soul, and bring you safely through it, that you may praise His holy name. Perhaps you have sometimes been led to wonder why God, your Creator and Governor, should thus afflict you; and the thought has come into your mind, that you were hardly dealt with. Be assured, that all such thoughts arise from the enemy of your soul, and are all unworthy of God. Instead of dealing hardly with you, the dealings of God are merciful. He corrects you in mercy, as a kind father may at times think it his duty to correct the child in whom he *delighteth*. Therefore, let this thought be fixed in your heart: "God is at this very time visiting me *in mercy to my soul*; it is a time for improvement; God is calling upon me to think seriously, and to lift up my heart to him; He sees that I have been more anxious about this world than the world to come; and he has, in great love and pity to my soul, sent this affliction." You are now in trouble; perhaps suffering through distressing events; your prospects in life are all disappointed; or your circumstances are perplexing and in ruin; or death hath torn from you tender relatives; the partner of your affections, the child in whom your very life seemed bound up, or the friend that was dear to you as your own soul, is now no more; or perhaps you yourself are laid on a bed of sickness, and death stares you in the face. It is then with you *the day of adversity*;—God is speaking to you. God at this time calls you aside from the world in tender *mercy*, that you may converse with him and your own soul. He speaks tenderly, though awfully; he expects that you should listen to him; and his gracious design is, to fix your mind upon what he hath done to save your immortal soul. God so loved the world, that he

sent his blessed Son to save us, miserable sinners. The eternal Son of God became man, and died upon the cross, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Having made peace by his own precious blood, he rose again from the dead, and, according to the riches of his grace in the New Covenant, he freely offers pardon and salvation to all such as "truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." These truths you have often heard, from your very infancy, and perhaps as often forgot. It may be that the goodness of God has not as yet led you to repentance; but you have loved your sins, or been taken up by the cares of the world, or your pleasures, and, perhaps, have thought little or nothing about your God, your Saviour, or your immortal soul. And therefore, perhaps, it is that God in kindness calls you to consider. And may the *day of adversity* be, with you, *the accepted time*, may it be the *day of salvation*.

Art thou in adversity? Then consider,

1st, Who hath appointed the adversity.

2ndly, Wherefore God hath appointed it.

3dly, The improvement which God requires.

I. Who hath appointed it? Know that **IT IS OF GOD**; *who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*. God is now, at this very time, speaking to *you* individually. Remember God is infinite in glory and majesty. He is a **JUST GOD**, and has laid on you no more than you deserve.* He is a good and gracious God, and therefore designs your amendment and benefit. He is a wise God, and therefore hath judged this affliction to be *most useful* for you. How condescending is your heavenly Father! Oh! the compassion of God! Perhaps, my friend, never till this time did the concerns of your never-dying soul or the love of your Saviour, make any great impression on you. How merciful then is God! how very gracious! He hath appointed this adversity to check your carelessness, lest you should still depart from him, and perish for ever. Let your prayer then be this: "O my most merciful Saviour! have I so often offended thee, and art thou still seeking thy wandering sheep? Hast thou seen me so long foolish and ignorant, and thou correcting me in mercy? Doth not this fresh affliction tell me that thy arms are still open to receive me? Oh, let thy Holy Spirit assist me, that I may hear thy voice, and live forever."

Be assured, then, that **THIS IS OF GOD**; not of chance; but of gracious design. *To-day, then, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart*; your eternal happiness or eternal misery may depend on the use you make of this present affliction. It is the messenger of God. He does, as it were, by this means beseech you to be reconciled to him. Prize, then, this opportunity for serious reflection: if any of your friends or attendants advise

* Lam. iii. 22, 39.

you to put such thoughts away from you, they are the enemies of your soul; they act the very part which your adversary would have them act. Listen to the plain and tender advice of true pious friends, and say as David said, "*I know, O Lord, thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me.*"*

II. Wherefore hath God appointed it? The lesson of affliction is—*Man, know thyself; Man, know thy God.* The design of God, in what he hath laid upon you, is, 1st, To teach you what you really are. Job was a holy man; it pleased God to visit him with adversity: he was brought to cry out, "Behold, I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."† He was sorely afflicted, and by this means he became more acquainted with God and with himself. Say, then, "This is God's present design with me; I have gone astray like a lost sheep, this is now the voice of my God, calling me to repentance." If God, then, is teaching you what you are, remember it is your duty to examine yourself. Humble yourself, therefore, before God; consider your sins. It was God who made you, and formed you for His glory and your good. Have you honoured God with all your powers of soul and body? Have you been intent on glorifying him? Have you endeavoured to lead others into the way of godliness? Let me beg your serious attention, and be not angry when I tell you the truth. You must study the Law of God, the Ten Commandments, and examine yourself closely by them; for *by the Law is the knowledge of sin.*‡ The Law of God declares, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."§ This law is spiritual. that is, it reacheth to the thoughts and intents of the heart; it condemns a sinful thought as well as a sinful action. It reveals the wrath of God against all unrighteousness in thought, word, and deed. Perhaps, till now, you seldom or never considered this. Ask your conscience, as to the first and second commandments, *Have you loved God above all?* Put it home to your heart; EXAMINE YOURSELF. Have you not been more anxious about riches, gain, business, the pleasures and honours of the world, than about serving God and glorifying him? Have you not loved these things more than God? Have you not been more concerned to gratify yourself in these things than to do the will of God?|| Have you worshipped and served God with all your heart?

Examine yourself as to the third commandment: *Have you honoured God's holy name?* Have you never cursed or sworn, or taken God's name in vain by such expressions as, *O Lord! O Christ!* &c. on trifling occasions? Have you never repeated

* Psalm cxix. 75.

§ Matt. xxii. 37, &c.

† Job xl. 4, xliii. 6.

|| Matt. x. 37, &c. 1 John ii. 15

‡ Rom. iii. 20.

your prayers in private, or at Church, without thinking on what you were about? Oh, what a mockery of God is this!

Examine yourself as to the fourth commandment: as far as it applies to the Christian Sabbath, *Have you remembered to keep holy that day?* Have you never profaned it by sloth, worldly business, revelling, drunkenness, or dissipation? Have you never wilfully neglected public worship, or private duties? Did your children and your servants profit by your good example and instruction? * Or were they, *by your neglect*, taught to neglect God also? Alas! how many Sabbaths have you lost, for which you must give account.

Examine yourself as to the second table of God's holy Law, *your duty towards your neighbour*. You have, perhaps, lived without God; so has your wife, or your husband; so have your children; so have your servants; and you have taken no pains to prevent it. What advice have you given them? What prayers have you offered to God for them? Alas! alas! with such unconcern for their souls, how can you say you have done your duty to your neighbour?

How have you observed the fifth commandment? Have you honoured your father and mother, and given each superior their due respect? Have you treated inferiors with justice, kindness, and the honour due to all men? Read the Church Catechism on your duty to your neighbour, and examine yourself thereby.

The sixth commandment enjoins, "Thou shalt do no murder." This command not only forbids the taking away the life of another, but all anger, hatred, envy, malice, and want of regard to our neighbour's life and preservation. Our blessed Lord thus explains it, "*Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.*"† Now ask your own heart, have you not given way to anger and passion and resentment? Have you never been angry without a cause?

The seventh commandment enjoins, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Our Lord thus explains it, in its spiritual extent. "*I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*"‡ The commandment requires, not only to be free from the grosser sins of adultery and fornication; but condemns all lascivious thoughts, words, and actions. Have you never indulged unchaste desires, or yielded to temptations?

The eighth commandment enjoins a sincere regard for our neighbour's property. It requires integrity in all our dealings. Alas! how is this commandment broken every day, by petty frauds in buying and selling, without any regard to uprightness, or the real value of the article; by defrauding the government of its customs; by running in debt, and borrowing money, with no respect of paying it again; by waste, sloth, and idleness. Ask

* Isaiah lviii. 13

† Matt. v. 22.

‡ Matt. v. 28.

your conscience, Have you never taken unfair advantage of your neighbour or employer? Have you never been unmindful of his interest?

The ninth commandment enjoins a sincere regard for our neighbour's character. It does not merely forbid false swearing in a court of justice; but all lying, slander, and evil speaking. Examine yourself. Have you never injured your neighbour by inventing or spreading reports to his disadvantage, speaking untruths of him, or sinking his reputation by unnecessary exposure of his failings? Have you in every instance put away lying and deceit, and been careful to speak the plain truth?

The tenth commandment sums up the whole duty, by forbidding all unlawful desires. St. Paul himself acknowledged that this commandment brought him in guilty before God. "*I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*"*

Now enquire, Can you lay your hand on your heart, and say, I am not guilty? Consider this perfect standard of duty: have you loved God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength? Have you honoured his holy name and his word, and served him truly all the days of your life? Can you lay your hand on your heart, and say, I have loved my neighbour as myself; I have always done unto others as I would others should do unto me? Have you been always *attentive* not to injure your neighbour's character, property, chastity, person, and happiness? My friend, judge yourself, for you will assuredly be judged of the Lord.

Observe, then, with awe and reverence, that the holy word of God charges you with sin, and condemns you as a sinner. The Liturgy of the Church acknowledges the awful truth, when, after the recital of each commandment, we are taught to say, "*Lord have mercy upon us.*" This very language is a confession of guilt; and when we adjoin, "*Incline our hearts to keep this Law,*" it is a declaration of our utter helplessness. It is plain and clear, then, that you are a transgressor of God's holy Law, you have not done your duty; therefore you have no righteousness of your own to trust in, no hope in yourself. Lay your hand on your heart, and confess yourself a sinner. Perhaps you have been just and honest, kind and friendly; but have you done your duty *as you ought*, either to God or to man? God, as you have heard, charges you with sin, and the sentence of his divine Law is, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.*" Have you laid this to heart, and repented truly of your sins past? You have been informed that God gave his Son to die for your sins; but how little, how seldom or ever, have you thought about it! alas! no more than if such an event had never been. The love of God in Christ

* Rom. vii. 7

will be the wonder of eternity; it is what all the angels and saints of God adore! But man seldom thinks about it. Oh, what base ingratitude! What contempt of God is this! Now God designs, by this affliction, to bring these things home to your heart; and if you are rightly humbled on account of your sins, you will say, *God be merciful to me a sinner*; O Lord, I thank thee that thou didst not cut me off by sudden death; I bless thy holy name that this light chastisement of me is sent when I deserved *eternal condemnation*.

2. Another reason why God afflicted you is, to show you *the uncertainty and vanity of all earthly things*. By nature we love the world: God smites in mercy to take us off from it.* You were lately eager in the pursuit of riches or pleasure. You were in hopes of getting forward in life, and promised yourself much comfort and happiness; but you have met with vexation and disappointments. My friend, what can pleasures do for you now? Can riches and honours profit you now? Can they rescue from the grave a beloved relation? Or, supposing that *you* are likely to die, do these things give you any comfort? Alas! you must leave them all, and that FOREVER. Oh, then, look far above them! Look up to your God! "Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth."†

3. Your heavenly Father has appointed this *Adversity* to teach you, *The knowledge of Himself, as the spring of true and abiding happiness*.

When you were in health and spirit, you were busy in the world; you perhaps rose early and came late to rest; but you allowed yourself no time to think of your soul, no time to think upon God. Awful thought! a creature depending on his Creator every moment, and yet, *never thinking* upon him! Oh! what agony will this occasion to thousands of souls in eternity! To reflect, "I once had a merciful God, a gracious Redeemer; but I was too busy in the world to think about him. Alas! alas! I trifled with his tender mercies, and with my own destruction: I turned a deaf ear to God, and now he turns a deaf ear to my cries, and that FOREVER." God hath afflicted you *in mercy*; that you may think of him; and that you may have *time* to think of him, he hath called you aside from the bustle of the world. Improve then this opportunity. How kind is God! How slow to anger! How gracious his designs! This very affliction tells you that he is not willing that you should perish, but rather that you should come to him, and be saved. Hear how tender his words are: "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*" "*As a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him; he knoweth their frame, he remembereth that they are but dust.*"‡ Oh, how great is his goodness!

Adversity is thus designed to teach you the *loving-kindness*

* 2 Cor. i. 9.

† Col. iii. 1, 2.

‡ Rev. iii. 19.

of the Lord; he smites in mercy to your soul. True happiness consists in loving, serving, praising, adoring God, and doing his holy will. Unless you seek your happiness in this, you will always be unhappy both here and hereafter. God embitters the world, to wean our hearts from it. In this affliction he brings the matter home to your heart; your comforts are dying comforts; you yourself are a dying creature; follow the advice of your Saviour, "*Seek first of all the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things (which are really needful) shall be added unto you.*"*

III. Consider the improvement which God requires you to make of this Adversity. It is a time designed of God for very serious reflection. Things are serious with you now; how much more serious will they be hereafter! If you cannot bear to reflect on your sins and on eternity now, oh, think how you will bear it, when your eyes shall see the Son of Man coming in his glory, and all his holy angels with him; when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised; when you and all your acquaintance, and the whole world, shall stand before him. Oh, place these scenes before you; they are great realities, and you will most certainly find them so. Therefore seize this opportunity to converse with your heart. Take the advice of the Bible: "*Examine yourself whether you are in the faith.*"† Read the Law of God with great attention; "*By the Law is the knowledge of sin.*"‡ Ask your conscience, have you, in thought, word, and deed, lived according to the will of God? Have your disposition, your temper, your pursuits, your behaviour, your conduct, been regulated by the Bible? Read the Lord's Prayer; make every petition a form of self-examination, and enquire of your heart whether that which you have so often expressed with your lips has ever been the request of your soul. Ah, my friend, how home will these questions come to you, when you are standing before your God, waiting your final doom! Let me urge them upon you now, that you may flee from the wrath to come. On the other hand, are you humbled under a sense of your sins? Then behold the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Glory for ever be to his name; He came down from heaven; He lived and died for us; He died to save; He lives at this time in glory, to receive returning sinners. *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.* He calls you to repentance. *God commands all men, every where, to repent.*§

Repentance consists in a genuine sorrow for sin, as committed against the infinitely holy Law of God: it implies a turning from sin unto God, with steadfast endeavour after new obedience. Do you enquire, "What must I do to be saved?" so surely does the Gospel address you, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou*

* Matt. vi. 33.

† 2 Cor. xiii. 5.
§ Acts xvii. 30.

‡ Rom. iii. 20.

*shalt be saved.** He is able and willing to save you; cast your hope on his mercy; humble yourself before him; entreat him to make this affliction a blessing to your immortal soul.

Is any man afflicted? says St. James, "LET HIM PRAY." Be much in prayer to God: God invites you to pray to him. He says, *Ask, and you shall receive. Your heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him.†* Lift up your heart to your God. Many of your acquaintance have been called into eternity, and some of them, perhaps, *SUDDENLY*; yet God has spared you. Had he cut you off *suddenly, unprepared*, where, ah where, might you have been! *Awake, then, arise, and call upon God. "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise, from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."‡* Stir up your heart, and the hearts of your family and friends, and call upon God to sanctify this present adversity, that your soul may profit by this visitation, and that you may have reason to bless God for it, and that for ever. Have you lost a tender and affectionate partner? Have you followed to the grave a beloved parent, or a beloved child, or the friend that was dear unto you as your own soul? Or, are you in sickness, in delicate health, or brought to poverty and want; or in dying circumstances, and in a few days expecting to leave all below? Still God is able to comfort you, to raise you up, to provide for you. He is the Father of the fatherless; he pleadeth the cause of the widow. How many widows have been left friendless, and without a protector; but God has proved himself their protector and their friend! How many fatherless children have had none but God to look to, and the providence of God has raised up friends and benefactors. Let your distress lead you to him; then it will prove a blessing. God is now speaking. To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart. How tenderly did Christ weep over Jerusalem!§ How tenderly did he weep at the tomb of Lazarus! Now in heaven he pleads, Father, spare that sinner yet another year. Call to mind how he hung upon the cross, bleeding and dying. He died that sinners should live forever. May such *dying* love produce a lasting impression on your heart and mind.

Lastly, Should it please God to support you under this adversity, and raise you from this sickness, let me entreat you to consider—have you profited by it? Can you say, It is good for me that I have been afflicted? Has your affliction humbled you on account of your sins? Do you acknowledge that God is just in all which he hath laid upon you? Has it weaned your heart more from the world, and are you more in earnest for eternity? Has it brought you more to admire, adore, and love your God, the Lord Jesus Christ and his great salvation? Have you a deeper sense of your need of the grace of the Holy Spirit? Hath your

* Acts xvi. 31.

† Luke xi. 9, &c.
§ Luke xix. 42. John xi. 35.

‡ Eph. v. 15

affliction had a sanctified effect on your temper, your words, and actions! Hath it made you more tender, kind, and friendly to others; and taught you to have a real anxiety for their salvation? Oh, be careful not to lose these impressions. Seek the acquaintance of those whose pious conversation will assist you in the ways of God; and flee from the company of those, who, by the love of the world, negligence towards God, and dislike of spiritual things, would ruin your soul. Remember that religion is not the work of a deathbed, but is the grand *business of life*. Remember, also, that if this merciful warning be not improved, it may be the last warning—your death may be sudden. God may say to you, “My Spirit shall not always strive with that man.” “I will come in an hour that he is not aware of, I will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Oh, then, let every consideration of judgment and of mercy, of the love of God our Saviour, and of the excellence of his Law, of the value of your soul, and the importance of eternity, awaken you to flee from the wrath to come. Then, indeed, shall these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, will receive you as a child returning to his arms, with holy delight. There shall be joy in the presence of the angels of God over you as a repenting sinner.

O what a blessed state is this! This is happiness indeed, and without it there is no happiness to be enjoyed in this world; for how can you be happy here, unless you have a well-grounded hope of being happy hereafter? May God then enable you to make such use of the present adversity, as may lead you to the knowledge and love of His holy ways. “*This is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.*” May your present affliction have this blessed effect. Then you will say, “*It was good for me that I have been afflicted.*” You will then esteem this affliction as one of your chief mercies. In a better world you will see and acknowledge that in all your sufferings, however painful, mortifying, and perplexing, your heavenly Father was too wise to be mistaken, and too good to be unkind.

“Good when he gives, supremely good,
Nor less when he denies;
Afflictions, from his sov’ign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.”

Then you will come out of great tribulation; God will wipe the tears from your eyes, and praise will be your employment forever.

With these practical reflections you will then, I trust, permit me earnestly and affectionately to impress upon you these important truths.

1. That God, your heavenly Father, hath appointed this adversity.

2. That he hath appointed it to teach you self-knowledge, the uncertainty and vanity of all earthly things.

3. The knowledge of himself, whom to know is eternal life.

Therefore without delay beseech God to give you true repentance and his Holy Spirit; set apart a portion of your time for prayer and for self-examination, and meditating upon the word of God. I entreat you, as your strength will admit, to read a portion of the Holy Bible every day; read it as a religious duty: endeavour to realize both its precepts and promises in your own person; thus receive it, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, as the true and spiritual food of your immortal soul. By this means, through the divine blessing, you shall never come into condemnation, but you shall live a life of favour with God and die in the hope of life everlasting.

I shall now conclude this address with the exhortation in the VISITATION OF THE SICK. This contains an excellent direction for the right improvement of adversity.

“Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God’s visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience or for the example of others, and that your faith may be found in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honourable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father; know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God’s mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ’s sake, and render unto him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto his will; it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life.

“Take, therefore, in good part the chastisement of the Lord: for (as St. Paul saith in the twelfth chapter to the Hebrews) whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. These words, good *brother*, are written in holy Scripture for our comfort and instruction; that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving, bear our

heavenly Father's correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please his gracious goodness to visit us. And there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For he himself went not up to joy, but first he suffered pain; he entered not into his glory, before he was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy, is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life, is gladly to die with Christ; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with him in everlasting life."

The following exhortation is also replete with judicious advice and spiritual consolation: *

"Therefore, brethren, take we heed betime, while the day of salvation lasteth; for the night cometh, when none can work. But let us, while we have the light, believe in the light, and walk as children of the light; that we be not cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us not abuse the goodness of God, who calleth us mercifully to amendment; and of his endless pity promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, if with a perfect and true heart we return unto him. For though our sins be as red as scarlet they shall be made white as snow; and though they be like purple, yet they shall be made white as wool. Turn ye (saith the Lord) from all your wickedness, and your sin shall not be your destruction. Cast away from you all your ungodliness that ye have done; make you new hearts and a new spirit: Wherefore will ye die, O ye house of Israel? seeing that I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: turn ye then, and ye shall live. Although we have sinned, yet have we an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. For he was wounded for our offences, and smitten for our wickedness. Let us, therefore, return unto him, who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners; assuring ourselves that he is ready to receive us, and most willing to pardon us, if we come unto him with faithful repentance; if we submit ourselves unto him, and from henceforth walk in his ways; if we will take his easy yoke, and light burden upon us, to follow him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit; seeking always his glory, and serving him duly in our vocation with thanksgiving. This if we do, Christ will deliver us from the curse of the law, and from the extreme malediction which shall light upon them that shall be set on the left hand; and he will set us on his right hand, and give us the gracious benediction of his Father, commanding us to take possession of his glorious kingdom: unto which he vouchsafe to bring us all, for his infinite mercy." *Amen.*

* Communion Service of the Church of England.

P R A Y E R S

TO BE USED

BY THE SICK AND AFFLICTED.

 Read Psalm li.
An Act of Confession.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and for the glory of thy Name, turn from us all those evils that we most justly have deserved; and grant, that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy great mercy hast promised forgiveness of sins to all those that, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto thee; have mercy upon me, pardon and deliver me from all my sins, confirm and strengthen me in all goodness, and bring me to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favourable, O Lord, be favourable to thy people, who turn to thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For thou art a merciful God, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare thy people, good Lord, spare them; and let not thine heritage be brought to confusion. Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great; and after the multitude of thy mercies look upon us, through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

An Act of Praise.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity! we give thee, above all things, most humble and hearty thanks, O God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the Redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the Cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. Grant that we may always remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained for us, to our great and endless comfort. To him, therefore, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, may we give, as we are most bounden, continual thanks; submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Preparation for Death.

O Almighty God, Maker and Judge of all men, have mercy upon me thy weak and sinful creature; and if, by thy most wise and righteous appointment the hour of death be approaching towards me, enable me to meet it with a mind fully prepared for this great and awful trial. O let me not leave any thing undone which may help to make my departure safe and happy. Pardon the sins which I have committed against thee, by thought, word and deed, and all my neglects of duty. Pardon the sins which I have committed against my neighbour; and if others have wronged or offended me, incline my heart freely and fully to forgive them, and do thou forgive them also. Cleanse my soul from all its corruptions, and transform it into the likeness of thy Son Jesus Christ; that being clothed with his righteousness, and accepted through the merits of his death, I may behold thy face in glory, and be made partaker of thy heavenly kingdom. And, O merciful Father, give me that supply of spiritual comfort, which thou seest needful for me in my present condition; and grant that, when my change comes, I may die with a quiet conscience, with a well-grounded assurance of thy favour, and a joyful hope of a blessed resurrection, through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

P R A Y E R S

TO BE USED

IN BEHALF OF THE SICK AND AFFLICTED.



O LORD ALMIGHTY, who givest to thy creatures health and strength, and, when thou seest fit, visitest them with sickness and infirmity, be pleased to hear the prayers which we offer in behalf of *him* who is now afflicted by thy hand. Look down from heaven, behold, visit, and in thine own good time relieve *him*. Bless the means used for *his* recovery; and dispose *him* to place all *his* trust and confidence in thee, not in the help of man. Be merciful unto *him*, gracious Lord, not according to *his* deservings, but according to the necessity of *his* case, and according to the multitude of thy mercies in Jesus Christ. In submission to thy most wise and good disposal of all things, we beseech thee that this bitter cup may pass away from thy servant: but if that may not be, give *him* grace to improve it to the good of *his* soul, and set *him* forward on *his* way to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Almighty, ever-living God, Maker of mankind, who dost correct those whom thou dost love, and chastise every one whom thou dost receive; we beseech thee to have mercy upon this thy servant, visited with thine hand; and to grant that *he* may take *his* sickness patiently, and recover *his* bodily health, if it be thy gracious will; and whensoever *his* soul shall depart from the body, it may be without spot presented unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

On receiving the Holy communion.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did suffer death upon the Cross: prepare us, we beseech thee, by thy grace, for the worthy celebration of that holy ordinance, which he was pleased to appoint for a continual remembrance of his death, for a pledge of his love and for a sign and means of grace, to our great and endless comfort. Make us to discern the Lord's body; to remember and adore the exceeding love of Christ our Saviour thus dying for us. Give us repentance unto life not to be repented of. Endue us with a lively faith, a perfect love, and an universal charity. Enable us spiritually to receive the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; that so all carnal affections may die in us, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in us; and that being continually refreshed and strengthened by thy grace, we may

persevere in all godliness unto our lives' end, and finally receive an everlasting recompense, through the merits of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Hear us, Almighty and most merciful God and Saviour; extend thy accustomed goodness to this thy servant, who is grieved with sickness: sanctify, we beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to *him*; that the sense of *his* weakness may add strength to *his* faith, and seriousness to *his* repentance: that if it shall be thy good pleasure to restore *him* to *his* former health, *he* may lead the residue of *his* life in thy fear and to thy glory: or else give *him* grace so to take thy visitation, that after this painful life is ended, *he* may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Sick Child.

O Almighty God, and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death; look down from heaven, we humbly beseech thee, with the eyes of mercy upon this child, now lying upon the bed of sickness: visit *him*, O Lord, with thy salvation; deliver *him* in thy good appointed time from *his* bodily pain, and save *his* soul for thy mercies' sake: that if it shall be thy pleasure to prolong *his* days here on earth, *he* may live to thee, and be an instrument of thy glory, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in *his* generation; or else receive *him* into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity. Grant this, O Lord, for thy mercies' sake, in the same thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a sick Person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need; we fly unto thee for succour in behalf of this thy servant, here lying under thy hand in great weakness of body. Look graciously upon *him*, O Lord; and the more the outward man decayeth, strengthen *him*, we beseech thee, so much the more continually with thy grace and Holy Spirit in the inner man. Give *him* unfeigned repentance for all the errors of *his* life past, and steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus; that *his* sins may be done away by thy mercy, and *his* pardon sealed in heaven, before *he* go hence, and be no more seen. We know, O Lord, that there is no word impossible with thee; and that, if Thou wilt, thou canst even yet raise *him* up, and grant *him* a longer continuance amongst us: Yet, forasmuch as in all appearance the time of *his* dissolution draweth near, so fit and prepare *him*, we beseech thee, against the hour of death, that after *his* departure

hence in peace, and in thy favour, *his* soul may be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Commendatory Prayer for a sick Person at the point of departure.

O ALMIGHTY God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons; we humbly commend the soul of this thy servant our dear *brother*, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour; most humbly beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight. Wash it, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee. And teach us, who survive, in this and other like daily spectacles of mortality; to see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, thine only Son our Lord *Amen.*

A Prayer for Persons troubled in mind, or in conscience.

O BLESSED Lord, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts; we beseech thee, look down in pity and compassion upon this thy afflicted servant. Thou writest bitter things against *him*, and makest *him* to possess *his* former iniquities; thy wrath lyeth hard upon *him*, and *his* soul is full of trouble: but, O merciful God, who hast written thy holy word for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of thy holy Scriptures, might have hope; give *him* a right understanding of *himself*, and of thy threats and promises; that *he* may neither cast away *his* confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give *him* strength against all *his* temptations, and heal all *his* distempers. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make *him* to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver *him* from fear of the enemy, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon *him*, and give *him* peace, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O SAVIOUR of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

THE Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth.

and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore thy defence; and make thee know and feel, that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit thee. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, both now and evermore. *Amen.*

Prayer when any of the Family departs this life.

O MERCIFUL God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry as men without hope, for them that sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, and that at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

A THANKSGIVING.

To be added when any member of the Family has recovered from sickness.

WE humbly thank thee, O gracious and merciful Lord, that thou hast heard the prayers of thy servant, who was lately brought low by the visitation of sickness, and hast raised *him* up from the gates of the grave. Thou hast delivered *his* soul from death, *his* eyes from tears, and *his* feet from falling. O Lord, let it be good for *him* that *he* has been afflicted; teach *him* and us the uncertainty of this life, and give us grace to fix our hopes upon thy promises of a better, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

THE END.

THE DAY OF ADVERSITY

WHEN gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark, and friends are few,
On him I lean, who, not in vain,
Experienced every human pain ;
He feels my griefs, he sees my fears
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the ill I would not do ;
Still he, who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

When vexing thoughts within me rise,
And, sore dismay'd my spirit dies ;
Then he, who once vouchsafed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye.

When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend,
Which covers all that was a friend,
And from his voice, his hand, his smile,
Divides me for a little while ;
Thou, Saviour, seest the tears I shed,
For thou didst weep o'er Lazarus dead.

And, oh ! when I have safely past
Through every conflict but the last,
Still, still unchanging, watch beside
My bed of death—for thou hast died :
Then point to realms of endless day,
And wipe the latest tear away.

ON HOLINESS:

A

SERMON.

BY THE LATE
THOMAS WILSON, D.D.

BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

NEW-YORK.

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ON H O L I N E S S.

HEBREWS xii. 14.

*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.**

IT is very much to be feared, that the generality of Christians do not know what that holiness is, without which we must never hope for salvation. And yet there is nothing which it concerns men more to know than *this*; because there is nothing more certain, than that a Christian, who is not endued with this grace, is no more capable of being happy in heaven, than a sick man is capable of taking pleasure in a sumptuous feast.

But this is not what is generally considered. Most people have a confused notion of heaven, as of a place where all Christians will one day be very happy; every one for himself making no manner of doubt, but it will be his *own* portion at the last; in the mean time taking little or no care to be qualified for it. And yet our Lord, to hinder Christians from falling into this sad delusion, has assured us,† “That wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

And, indeed, a very little consideration would convince any man, how *utterly impossible* it is for an *unholy man* to see God in peace; for to *see the Lord*, that is, to know and enjoy him, *is to see him as he is.*‡ It is to see a most *holy, just, and powerful* God;—One who, for their sin, turned the very angels out of heaven into hell;—who destroyed the whole world with a flood for their wickedness;—who, for their unholy lives, destroyed whole cities with fire and brimstone;—who has declared by his own Son, that this shall be the very sentence, which (at the day of judgment) he shall pass upon ungodly sinners, “Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

N^o. 7, let us but consider, how we bear the sight of a man like ourselves whom we may have unworthily provoked, and who has

* See Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3, &c. 2 Cor. v. 17. Ephes. iv. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 3. 7. 2 Tim. i. 19. Tit. ii. 14. 1 John ii. 29; iii. 8, 9, 10; and iv. 10. 1 Pet. i. 15.

† Matt. vii. 13, 14.

‡ 1 John iii. 2.



it in his power to punish us; and then we may judge how a sinner can abide the sight of an angry God, whose service he has forsaken, whose invitations he has slighted, whose commands he has all his life long broken, whose offers of pardon he has rejected, neither regarding his threats, nor valuing his promises! How can such a sinner possibly bear the sight of such a one, and be happy? And is it not for this reason, that the Scriptures are every where so express concerning the necessity, *the absolute necessity*, of being converted, of becoming new creatures, of perfecting holiness in the fear of God? Is it not for this eternal reason, because WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD?—No man whatever, no man who hopes to be saved.

This shows the *delusion* of those who are apt to imagine, that they may be dispensed with for leading a *life of holiness*, either on account of their *ignorance*, *bad circumstances*, their *profession*, *worldly business*, their *age*, or the like. If no man, without this qualification, shall see the Lord, then neither the rich nor the poor, the master nor his servant, neither the clergy nor the laity, neither the husbandman nor the tradesman, neither the young nor the old, ought to satisfy themselves, ought to be easy, without that holiness which the Gospel requires of all its professors—of all who hope for happiness.

And, indeed, as religion, and the holiness it requires is necessary for every man, so is it consistent with every lawful calling and employment in the world. There have been holy princes, and holy beggars;—holy laymen, as well as holy clergymen;—piety in the shop and in the field, as well as in the closet and in the Church. There have been devout soldiers and devout seamen. And God requires it still, which he would not do, were it not *necessary*, were it not *consistent* with every condition of life.

How *necessary* it is, we shall easily see, if we consider the condition we are in by reason of the sin of our first parents.

Indeed we are all of us ready enough to own that we are subject to sin; and the consequence is, we do many things that displease God, and make him our enemy; and then it is very natural for us not to love him, not to desire to be where he is. And until this disorder be mended, God can take no pleasure in us, we can take no delight in him, we can hope for no favours from him.

To mend this great disorder, and that we may not be forever miserable, God has appointed us to be *holy*, as the only way to be *happy*. He has given us *rules* and *means* to make us so; and he has made known to us the danger of not closing with them. It concerns us, therefore, *more than our life is worth*, to be truly informed,

First: In what this holiness consists.—*2dly*. What it is which the generality of Christians satisfy themselves with, instead of true holiness.—*3dly*. How this habit of holiness is to be attained.—And, *lastly*, To have some sure marks, by which we may

have the comfort of knowing that we are in the way of holiness, and consequently of happiness.

And these are the things which I would desire you to consider with the most serious attention.

I. We will first consider, *What this holiness is, which is so necessary to our happiness.*

Now, all Christians being dedicated to God in baptism, are thereby become HOLY TO THE LORD; that is, God is pleased to look upon them as his own, and to give them laws to govern themselves by; and they oblige themselves to obey these laws. He gives them his Holy Spirit to enable them to do so; and promises them eternal life, if they continue faithful to their vows.

Now, if Christians, when they come to years of discretion, would lay these things seriously to heart, they would most thankfully make good the conditions promised on their part; that is, they would endeavour to be *holy*, as he is *holy* to whom they are *dedicated*. But, instead of being so, too many quite forget that they are Christians, and fall into such ways of living, as makes God their enemy, and forfeit all the blessings which he had promised them. And most sad would have been the consequence, had not God, who foresaw this disorder, provided also a remedy; and this is, *a sincere repentance for sins past, and a sincere obedience afterwards*. But then, Christians must beware of abusing this goodness; for *if they fail in these, THERE ARE NO HOPES OF MERCY*.

So that you see that THIS HOLINESS, *without which no man must see the Lord*, must begin in a SINCERE-REPENTANCE,—in devoting ourselves *anew* to God, and in studying to please him all our days, by leading a life agreeable to the Gospel of Christ.

And most miserably blind are they who will not see the danger of *putting off their repentance*; for while they do so, they *are in the way of damnation*.

Now every sinner who is *startled* at this; and knows that the *grace of repentance* is the gift of God, will beg it of him with the *greatest earnestness*, and *without delay*, as a most necessary preparation to that *holiness* without which he must be *miserable* for ever.

In what that holiness consists, we now come to consider. And, in general, it consists in such a *prevailing love of God*, as makes a Christian to hate all sin, as a thing most hateful to God; to be afraid of, and to avoid, all temptations to every thing that he believes will displease God: such a love as makes us zealous to promote the glory of God, and to *please* him in every thing; desirous to know his will, and resolved at all times to obey it; and cheerfully closing with all the *means* which he has ordained to work in us these holy dispositions.

But to be a little more particular, and to consider it, as it has relation to *God*, to our *neighbour*, and to *ourselves*:

Holiness with regard to God consists in a *firm faith in God as our Creator and Redeemer*,—in a just dread of his *power*,—in a

thankful sense of his *goodness*,—in a grateful acknowledgment of his *mercies*,—in hearing his *word* with a glad mind, and in submitting our reason to the revelation he has made of himself, and of his will;—in obeying his laws; and at all times owning our dependance upon him, by praying to him for whatever we want, and ever praising him for his daily favours;—in having a great regard for every thing that belongs to *him*, his *word*, his *day*, his *house*, his *ordinances*, and his *ministers*. And whoever fails in any of these particulars *wilfully*, will fail in a very material part of *holiness* with regard to God himself.

Holiness which respects our *neighbour* consists in *loving him sincerely*; that is, in doing to *him* all that in reason we desire should be done to ourselves; particularly in being just and kind to him, in relieving his necessities;—in forgiving our enemies, and praying for them;—in comforting the afflicted;—in giving good advice to those that stand in need of or desire it;—in reproving those that sin, and in being ready to every good work;—in a dutiful obedience to our superiors, whether in Church or state;—and lastly, in being so exemplary in our lives, as to lead others to *love*, to *fear*, and to *serve* God.

And then, for that *holiness* which relates to *ourselves*; it consists, in keeping the *body pure and undefiled, as the temple of God ought to be*, and the mind as free from errors as possible;—in serving God devoutly, and making religion our delight, as it is our duty;—in abstaining from every thing that is evil;—in remembering our past sins with detestation; and in returning to our duty without delay, whenever we are sensible that we have done amiss;—in moderating our desires after all earthly things, whether they be pleasures, riches, or honours:—in submitting to the will of God, being content with that condition his providence has ordered for us;—bearing afflictions patiently, and endeavouring to profit by them;—in denying our own wills and desires, and in weaning our hearts from the world; that we may *love God above all things*, which is the sure principle of holiness, and the greatest happiness of a soul ready to part from the body.

And they that satisfy themselves with any thing less than this happiness which we have now described, they do it at their utmost peril.

II. This will oblige us *to make some reflections upon those delusions with which too many Christians make their minds easy, instead of striving after that holiness which the Gospel requires.*

And in the first place, it is but too plain that very many satisfy themselves with the bare name of being Christians. And they that would think it a great misfortune to want Christian baptism, can yet be content to live all their days in an utter neglect of the vows they then made of *leading a holy life*. They can be content to do *that* which they would not have the patience to hear any man say they might do with safety; that is, that provided they be Christians, it is no matter how careless lives they lead

Christians would do well to consider what the Spirit of God saith. That we are *heirs of salvation* upon no other terms than these, "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."* And whoever does not do so, his Christian name will be of little use to him.

The next great mistake is of those who place *holiness* in outward devotion; in attending the public worship; in hearing the word, and observing ordinances. Christians should consider, that these are only *means* of attaining holiness: that as such they are necessary to be observed; but that they are otherwise of no value in the sight of God, if they do not help to free us from the slavery of sin; cure us of an immoderate love for the world; increase our faith and hope in God; and bring us to love him with all our hearts, and our neighbour for his sake.

"Who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"† was the very question which God asked those Jews who were careful to attend the temple service, but took no care to lead a life answerable to such a practice.

There are many who satisfy themselves with leading a moral, harmless life, (as people love to speak,) but without any regard to the law of God, or taking any care to regulate the heart, or to cure its corruptions; and lastly, without acknowledging the necessity of a Redeemer.

Now; though this sort of holiness might be commendable in an heathen, yet it will never be accepted from Christians. To bring forth *no fruit* was cause sufficient for that sentence upon the barren tree, "Cut it down, and cast it into the fire."

Christians should know, that faith is the only principle of holiness; because it is faith only that can create in us those holy dispositions,—of thankfulness to God for his mercies, of loving his law, of desiring to please him, and of dreading his anger; all which are absolutely necessary to fit us for the vision of God.

There is another sad mistake which many Christians labour under, and that is, *in depending upon good purposes*. They know they are not what they should be; they wish, and hope, and resolve, that it shall not always be so; and are so weak as to imagine, that there is something which pleaseth God in such good purposes; though at the same time they suffer the world, its cares, its pleasures, and all its idols, to possess their hearts. Now this is so far from lessening, that it increases their guilt; while they make no better use of those holy purposes which the good Spirit of God puts into their minds, in order to lead them to a true conversion.

There is another mistake as fatal and as common; it is that of those, who confess, are sorry for, and forsake their sins for awhile, and then return to them again. Now; this is just as

* Titus ii 12.

† Isaiah 12.

much a *holy life*, as that man's is a *regular life*, who lives disorderly till he is sick, takes up till he is well, and then returns to his follies, and does so till death puts an end to an ill-spent life.

Christians are but too apt to seek for their own justification in the bad lives of others. *I am not as bad as that publican*, was an old device to make the mind easy without true holiness; and Christians follow the example without perceiving it. God grant that the judgment which our Lord has given in this very case, may cure all Christians of so pernicious a mistake!

But then there are those who comfort themselves with *this thought*,—that they are no worse than others: *every man has his failings, and I have mine*. So that *covetousness* is one man's failing; *drunkenness* is another's; *whoredom*, perhaps, is another's; *injustice, profane swearing, backbiting, hatred, variance, despising the ordinances of God*, are the failings of others.

Now; what place do Christians suppose that heaven is, if such as these shall be its inhabitants? St. Paul's words,* if seriously attended to and believed, would cure Christians of this mistake: "I tell you, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And then they may know what is like to be their portion.

Why then, say others, this is enough to make people *fall into despair*; if such a change of heart and life, such a care of the soul, such holy dispositions, are necessary to fit us for heaven and happiness.

Why now, in truth, Christians, while they lead unholy lives, *should* despair of salvation. And it would be the greatest cruelty to persuade them to hope well for themselves, until they can be persuaded to live up to that measure of knowledge and strength which God has for the present given them, and according to the condition of life in which the providence of God has placed them. It is not required that Christians should be perfect at once, or all equally perfect; but it is absolutely necessary, that all Christians should sincerely endeavour to please God to the best of their power, and then they are as perfect as God would have them to be.

We know how hard it would be to cure very many Christians of another great delusion,—of thinking that they have *time enough* before them to get such habits of holiness as the Gospel requires. Some think that they are *too young* to set about so serious a work; others imagine that worldly business will excuse them for the present.

Let us put these and such like pretences into their true language, and see how it will sound:—It is too soon to be *holy*; that is, it is too soon to love God, to keep his commands, to strive to please him: but when I have had my share of worldly pleasures as others have had before me, which I cannot have if I

should now devote myself to God, *then* I will begin to be holy. When I have got wealth enough to make the remainder of my life very easy, which I cannot do so soon as I would without breaking some of God's laws, *then* I will become a new man. I know it may be said to me, as it has been to thousands before me, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." I know, likewise, that God hath said, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts; lest ye never enter into my rest." I know, too, that the longer I go on in the ways of sin, the harder it will be to reform. But all this shall not discourage me, I will go on, though I perish eternally

This, I say again, is the *true language* of such as *put off their conversion*. Let but people speak in these words, and see how it will sit upon their minds.

And this brings us to the last and greatest mistake of all, which is of those many who place all their hopes of being *holy* and *happy*, IN A DEATHBED REPENTANCE.—Most people being serious when they come to die, and showing a great concern for having lived no better, this is called repentance. And it being often said of such as had lived bad lives, *that they made a very good end*: and people in their last wills leaving their souls to God, in hopes that he will receive them into paradise, as sure as their friends will give their bodies a Christian burial; and none return from the dead, to show the sad mistake: hence it is, that unthoughtful people flatter themselves with vain hopes, that all almost are happy when they die.

Christians would do much better to conclude, that God will not depart from the declaration he has made:—"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord;" and, therefore, all, who live without holiness, *must* die without hopes of mercy. And then, what will all these sad delusions we have mentioned profit those who depend upon them? Happy they who lay hold of the present time, and by a speedy conversion enter into the way of holiness, and continue in it unto their lives' end!

III. And this brings us to consider, *How this holiness is to be attained*. It is not the work of *nature* but of *grace*, to "*perfect holiness in the fear of God*."* It is for this reason we are obliged to make use of all those *means* which God has appointed to fit us for heaven; the chief of which are, the *Word* and *Prayer*. By the first our *faith* is increased, and by the second our *graces*.

Now every Christian, whose heart God has touched with a sincere desire of becoming holy, (for it is to such only one can speak to any saving purpose) must seriously consider what God has made known in his Word concerning *himself*, his *will*, and concerning *mankind*.

For instance;—In *that Word* we see our *corruption*, our *weakness*, and our *danger*. We there read, how men, ever since

* 2 Cor. vii 1.

there were men, have been provoking God by their wickedness, and how God has punished them continually. We there learn, that we are all of the same race and make; all subject to the same sins, and to the same punishment.

The same Word makes known to us the *great goodness of God*; that in order to rescue us out of the power of the devil, and to deliver us from the slavery of sin, he has put us under the government of his own Son; and has promised to make us eternally happy, if it be not our own fault. That he is so good as to call us his children, that we may live as becomes children of so holy a Father; and that we may depend upon his *love*, upon his *promises*, and upon his *assistance*, as a child may do upon the love of a tender father.

And knowing that if he should suffer us to follow our own natural inclinations, we should certainly ruin ourselves, he has therefore, given us *laws*, not only to keep us from sin and misery, but to make us partakers of a divine nature; that is, to make us *holy*, that we may be capable of being *happy*.

That we may have these laws always before us, he has appointed his *Ministers* to explain them, and to sound them continually in the ears of all such as shall be disposed to hear and to obey them: and to all such he has promised his Holy Spirit, to enlighten their understandings, to enable them to keep his laws, and to overcome all the difficulties they can possibly meet with.

And lest the difficulties of a holy life should affright them, or the commands of Jesus Christ should seem hard to flesh and blood; this same *Word of God* sets before us the very different portions of good and bad men in the next life, in these most affecting words: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

And now; what has a Christian to do, who has any concern for his everlasting well-being, but to lay hold of the other *great means of salvation*; and that is PRAYER, *which is the only sure remedy for all our wants and disorders*? What has a sinner, who is awakened with these truths, to do, but to beg of God to give him a true sense of his unhappy state, and grace and strength to break his bonds? What has he to do, but to put his cause into the hands of *Jesus Christ*, who is our advocate and peace-maker with God; the price of whose blood is sufficient to procure a full discharge of all his sins; to beg of *him* to remove all those hinderances to a true conversion, which the Devil, or his own corrupt nature, have laid in his way; and to give him that repentance to which he has promised mercy and pardon?

He will also beg of God, to create in him a new heart,—to

* John v. 23, 29

enable him to wean his affections from things temporal,—to redeem his misspent time, and faithfully discharge the duties of his place;—to convince him of the necessity of *mortification*, of *self-denial*, and of *watching* continually; that he may lay hold on all occasions of doing what he believes will please God, and of avoiding what God has forbidden.

And if to his prayers he add the often thinking of what must come hereafter, the thoughts of *death* will help to cure him of too great a fondness for this world;—the thoughts of a *day of judgment* will oblige him to strict holiness, justice, and charity, that in that day of visitation he may find mercy;—the fear of *hell* will oblige him to take any pains here, that he may escape the bitter pains of eternal death;—and the hopes of *heaven* will help to sweeten all the trouble of this mortal life.

These are the most sure means of attaining *holiness*. And as no man who hopes for heaven can be excused from being *holy*, so no Christian, (especially amongst us) can pretend to want the means of becoming so.

Every Christian has an opportunity of *hearing the Word of God*, and of learning his duty; of joining in the prayers of the church for every *grace*, for every *virtue*, for every *blessing*, he can possibly stand in need of; which God never denies to the sincere, and which the most *unlearned* have a right to, as well as the most *learned*, provided the heart be right; for there is the defect, if any, and never in the means.

Whoever, therefore, aspires after holiness, and lays hold of the means, *will certainly be renewed by the Spirit that is in him*.

And though to us evil habits may seem incurable, and true holiness almost impossible, considering our corrupt affections, yet they are not so to HIM *who hath called us unto holiness*; and who, by doing so, has obliged himself to give us all necessary assistance. But then let us remember, that we never shall be *holy*, never *happy*, without our *own sincere endeavours*.

And now you see, good Christians, what a great value you ought to have for the Word of God, by which we obtain that faith *which is necessary to purify the heart*. You see that all they who despise God's Ministers, who "are ordained for the perfecting of the Saints,"* are out of God's way of becoming holy. His *Word*, his *Day*, his *House*, the *Sacraments*, are all called holy; because God has appointed them as *means* to make us holy, and to keep us in the way of holiness.

Lastly; you see the blindness of those who pretend to be righteous and holy upon principles of natural reason, without the word and the grace of God. They are ignorant of *this truth*, that no man can be holy, *but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ*; that is, who receives him as his *Saviour*, his *Pattern*, his *Mediator*, his *Sovereign*, and his *Lawgiver*.

* Ephes. iv. 13

IV. We now come, in the last place, to consider, *How a Christian may make a judgment of the state he is in, with respect to this so necessary a qualification.* But this, at present, I must do in a very few words, having already detained you too long.

And in the first place let us lay down this for a truth, *that the manner of our life is the only sure proof of our holiness.*

We are sure that we ourselves are alive, because we act like living men.

Now, if we live and act like Christians, we may be *as sure*, that we are living members of Christ's body, and in the way of holiness. And we know that we live like Christians, when we love God and keep his commandments, *this being the only sure proof of our love of God.*

When, therefore, we are sure that we do not live in any known sin;—when sin is uneasy to us;—when we avoid it and all temptations to it, and by this means get the mastery over our corruptions;—when we keep our hearts pure, and suffer no sin knowingly to harbour there, which is *the only sure sign that we fear God, the searcher of hearts*;—when we pray to God continually for light to know, and power to do our duty, and conscientiously make use of the ordinary means of grace;—when the commands of God are no longer grievous to us, and the great truths of the Gospel affect our hearts, and make us more serious, more charitable, more just, more temperate, more devout;—why then we conclude, we are certainly in the way of holiness; especially if we are careful to discharge the duties proper to our state and condition of life, for which we shall be most accountable at the great day.

If the *rich*, for instance, are rich in good works; if the *poor* are contented with their lot;—if *young people* are modest, and careful to preserve their reputation and their innocence,—and *married* people are mindful of the vows they made before God, and live in peace and godliness;—if *parents* bring up their children in the fear of God, and honestly provide for their necessary support;—if *masters* take care that their servants live as becomes Christians, and treat them as such with humanity and justice; and *servants* are faithful in what belongs to their place and trust;—if *men of trade and business* act uprightly, without taking advantage of the necessities or ignorance of those with whom they deal;—if such *as are in affliction* do patiently submit to the chastisement of the Lord; and such *as are in prosperity* be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God;—if such *as are ignorant* are desirous to learn their duty, and thankful to those that are willing to instruct them;—if they that *are in authority* consider that they are in the place of God, and resolve to govern with justice and integrity, and their *subjects* yield them due obedience without defrauding them of their tribute;—and lastly, if *Pastors*, mindful of the great account they must give, are solicitous for the good of their flock, and these are

ready to follow their godly admonitions;—these are all instances of that holiness which God has commanded, which he is pleased with, and which he will reward, provided they are performed in obedience to his laws.

“Every man, therefore, that has this hope,” (of seeing God in peace,) “must purify himself even as He is pure.”* If death overtake any of us, before this is done, we are ruined forever.

Every man who wishes well to his own soul, cannot but be very thoughtful when he considers these things. Let us not stifle such thoughts; they are certainly from the good Spirit of God: let us, therefore, dwell upon them; let us improve them to our great advantage.

Let such as have arrived to any good degree of *holiness*, bless God for it, and beg of him the grace of perseverance. Let such as are yet unconverted, beg of God the grace of conversion: it is the only thing they ought to pray for, and it is the only favour God will grant them; and he will certainly grant it to every one who asks it sincerely. And it is this very thing which will be the condemnation of all such as die unconverted:—that God called them to *holiness*,—that he put them into the way of attaining it, that they might have had all necessary assistance for asking, and heaven and happiness for their pains, and yet they continue infensible, and die without hopes of mercy.

May God awaken all such as have it yet in their power to work out their salvation with a salutary fear of what must come hereafter! And may every soul of us consider of what moment it is to know whether we are like to be *justified* or *condemned*, when we shall appear before God; there being no truth more certain than *this*, which, therefore, I would leave upon your minds; *that whoever lives without holiness, will die without any reasonable hopes of mercy.*

May God Almighty set this home upon all our hearts, for Lord Christ's sake. To whom, &c.

* 1 John iii. 3.

THE END

THE
NATURE OF SIN:

A
SERMON.

BY THE LATE
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BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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THE NATURE OF SIN

NUMB. xxii. 23.

*Behold ye have sinned against the Lord : and be sure your sin will find you out.**

THESE words may be rendered two ways ; either as I now read them, *Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord : and be sure your sin will find you out ;* or thus, *Behold ye have sinned, and ye shall be sensible of it when evil overtakes you : or, Ye shall know your sin in the punishment thereof.*

From which words we may take a just occasion of considering the *Nature of Sin*, and the *Punishment that certainly follows it.*

Behold ye have sinned, &c.—I think it may very truly be said that most people, when they commit any sin, do hope that they shall never hear of it again. At least there are few people engaged in sinful courses, who are persuaded that *no sin shall escape without its due reward.*

Now, this is a truth which must of necessity be explained and made out, before ever we can hope to persuade people to keep out of the way of temptations, or to resist temptations, when they meet with them, against their will.

For if a man be once persuaded, that he cannot possibly escape the judgments of God ; but that either in this world, or (which is much worse) in the next, they will certainly overtake him, if he sin presumptuously ; that if in his own person, which is not often, he should escape the avenging hand of God, yet that his children, and his children's children, unto the third and fourth generation, may feel the smart of his folly and wickedness : if this could be so pressed upon men's minds as to be received and believed, it must certainly, in some measure, put a stop to a great many crying sins which are but too rife amongst us.

Let us, therefore, consider some of those most remarkable instances of God's displeasure against sin, and the punishments that have always attended it.

To begin with that of our first parents :—and that this in some measure affected the whole creation, and particularly their offspring, we have all reason to be sensible of, by the many evils

* See Gen iv. 7. Exod. xx. 32, 34. Job xlii. 26. Hosea vii. 2.

which we are subject to. Their first-born *son* felt it with a witness; and he was more inexcusable, in that he had warning given him by God himself of what would follow if he should go on to envy his brother as he did. "If thou doest well," that is, if thou repentest of this fault, "shalt thou not be accepted and forgiven? But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door,"* ready to hurry thee to destruction: so that going in, or coming out, thy guilt and punishment will always follow thee. And Cain felt this truth to his sorrow: "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Why: what was this punishment he so sorrowfully complains of? "Behold thou hast driven me out this day, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Here is an exact description and the case of a person *excommunicated for his crimes*; as Cain indeed was, by this sentence passed upon him by God himself. Nothing but *guilt*, and *dreadful apprehensions of punishment hanging over his head*, follows him wherever he goes; when once he is out of God's presence, from under his especial protection, and given over to the power of Satan.

And oh! that people would but consider this, before they yield to the temptations that beset them; that they would think of the *shame*, of the *sorrow*, of the *guilt*, of the *punishment*, that even in *this life* they are sure to meet with, by consenting to known iniquity;—that those that are *going to do wrong* would consider, how hard it will be to make *restitution*, and yet that *restitution* must be made (where it can be) as we hope for salvation:—that the *fornicator* and *adulterer* would consider, that when he gives way to this wickedness, "he goes as an ox to the slaughter, or as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life," and that both soul and body lie at stake;—that the *oppressor* would consider, that the "triumphing of the wicked is but short;" (as holy Job expresseth it, chap. xx.) "and though he hath swallowed down riches, yet he shall vomit them up again; that in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits, and a fire not blown shall consume him:"—Lastly, that we would all consider, that "there is no peace to the wicked," whatever they may propose to themselves; and that when they least think of it, "destruction shall come upon them: their sin will surely find them out."

But to proceed:—the next remarkable punishment of sin recorded in Scripture was that of the *Flood*, wherein the whole world (eight persons only excepted) were overtaken by their sins, and the vengeance of an offended God.

The cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* were the next dreadful instances of God's displeasure against impenitent sinners: and the

* Gen. iv. 7.

fire and brimstone, by which they were destroyed, are a standing, though faint, representation of that punishment which is appointed for impenitent sinners in the world to come.

Very remarkable, in the next place, were the *plagues of Egypt*, both for their number and circumstances; an example for all following generations, of the extreme folly of men's hardening their hearts under the judgments of God, instead of being amended by them.

And then, lest men should fancy themselves out of danger, because of the relation they bear to God; because, for instance, they are in covenant with him; or because they have received very great favours at his hands: or lastly, because they are not so great sinners as others that yet escape;—to convince the world of this mistake, these very people of Israel, for whose sake God had wrought so many wonders in Egypt, these very people became the most remarkable example of God's justice and severity against such as go on to disobey him, notwithstanding the warnings he has given them. Their sin found them out wherever they went; whether in the *wilderness*, or in the land of *Canaan*; and their wickedness followed them at their heels: until they were driven out of that good land, and sent as strangers among all nations, to teach them *what an evil thing and bitter it is to forsake the Lord*.

But before this came to pass, and while they were yet under the more immediate government of God, and under the direction of his Prophets, we have several remarkable instances left us upon record, of God's severe judgments upon private men, and families, as well as upon whole nations, for the contempt of his laws. I shall only mention the calamities which befell the house of David, for his two crying sins, *adultery* and *murder*; and the house of Solomon, for his sins, *intemperance* and *idolatry*. I mention *these*, because they were both great *princes*, and accountable to none but God for their irregularities; both highly favoured of God before they fell; and both as severely punished afterwards.

The crimes of David were with great art and contrivance concealed from the knowledge of the world: but all this would not do, *his sin found him out*, and brought upon him such a series of disasters, as were enough to have driven any other man to despair; and such as would have done so by him, if, upon *his sincere repentance*, he had not been supported by the Spirit of God.—His *sons*: one murdered another, rose in rebellion against himself, drove him from his own palace, debauched his wives.—His *subjects*: many of them abandoned him, the very vilest of his people affronted him to his face; and that very son whom he most doted on, he had the mortification to see slain in the midst of his iniquities and rebellion.

His son Solomon (when once he forsook the commandment of God) fared no better; he *multiplied strange wives*; these soon

introduced *idolatry*; and this abominable sin was the occasion of infinite misfortunes, which befell his family and kingdom for many generations.

Now all these things were written for our example and admonition. That we may see what we are to expect; what *have* been, and what are *like to be*, the fruits of sin; that if neither *private men*, nor *princes*; if *neither single cities*, nor *whole nations*, have escaped; if the third and fourth generations have felt the smart of their ancestors' folly and wickedness; it will be the maddest presumption in the world, for any man to think that *his sin only shall not find him out*.

The truth is, we are generally so far from being ignorant of *this*, that there is nothing more usual than for people, and those of the meanest capacities, to make *this observation*,—that God, even in this world, does one time or other overtake sinners. The only mistake and misfortune we labour under is *this*,—that while we do easily see the sins of other people in their punishment, we are not willing to believe that this will be our own case.

Now, this is a very fatal delusion, to acknowledge the *justice of God*, and *his providence*, in other men's punishments; and at the same time not to be awakened ourselves, and warned not to offend the righteous Judge of all the earth. This, therefore, will oblige us to consider, what it is that so bewitches men to do those things, which they have reason to believe they must dearly pay for one time or other.

Now, every man, who *knowingly* breaks the laws of God, must of necessity lie under some of these following *errors* or *delusions*:—*First*; that a man may avoid the punishment due to his sins, either by committing them in *secret*,—or by his *power*, or *wisdom*, if they should happen to be known.—Or, *secondly*; he may hope to repent before the judgments of God shall overtake him.—Or, *thirdly*; a man may fancy that it is not possible for him to avoid either the sin or the punishment that attends it.—Or, *fourthly*; because some have escaped the judgments of God in this world, though their sins have been sufficiently provoking, there are many who hope that they may do so also.—*Lastly*; there are but too many, who never think of a judgment to come; and if they can but escape in this life, they are not at all concerned for any after-reckoning.

These are, I think, the most *common delusions* by which men are led *knowingly* to sin against God, though they are *plainly told*, and generally find by sad experience, *that their sin will find them out*.

It will be necessary to bestow a few reflections upon each of these *most fatal delusions*.

And first; it is no new thing for people to hope to *hide* their sins, and by that means to escape the punishment that is due to them. "Hast thou seen" (saith God to Ezekiel, ch. viii. 12,) "what these people do in the dark? For they say, the Lord

seeth us not " And Job tells us, that the adulterer "waiteth for the twilight, saying, no eye shall see me."*

But alas! all this caution will not do, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." And both good and bad men have always found this true: "Thou didst this thing secretly," saith the Lord to David,† "but I will punish thee before all Israel, and before the sun;" that is, that they may see thy crimes in the judgments executed upon thee.

It will be sufficient to discover the folly of this delusion, by only repeating the words of the son of Sirach:‡ "A man that breaketh wedlock," or doeth any other wickedness, "saying thus in his heart, Who seeth me? What need I to fear? Such a man only feareth the eyes of men, and knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun. This man shall be punished in the streets of the city; and where he suspecteth not, he shall be taken; that men may know that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord."

After all, there is some *modesty*, though not much *wisdom*, in endeavouring to hide one's sins. But then there are people who are not concerned to be at this trouble, who are neither *ashamed* of their faults, nor *afraid* of the punishment they deserve. But what do they get by this? Why: they escape the censures of man, which are designed to reclaim them; and *they fall into the hands of the living God*, than which, the Scriptures say, nothing can be more dreadful.

And indeed we have instances enough, and some of them of the *greatest men on earth*, who were made sensible of this truth, *that God is able to control those who despise all other power.*

David and Nebuchadnezzar are two of those princes who felt this to their sorrow: and Joab and his brother, were two of those subjects who were too great for the laws, and too hard for their prince's power to deal with them; but God met them in a way worthy of their crimes.

And to instance but in one more:—Pray who called Judas to an account for *betraying the innocent blood!* The government approved of what he had done, and paid him for it: and he might have lived longer to have enjoyed his reward, if *his sin had not found him out*, and driven him to destruction.

All considering people will learn from what has been said, what a foolish and dangerous thing it is to hope to escape by *concealing* their crimes,—by *standing* in them,—or by *encouraging* other people in their wickedness, as if no harm would follow.

I shall conclude this particular with the words of the Wise Man:§ "Mercy may pardon the meanest," or the humble; "but mighty men," such as fear nothing, "shall be mightily tormented. For he who is Lord over all standeth in awe of no man's person,"

* Chap. xxiv 15.

† 2 Sam. xii. 12.
§ Wisd vi. 6

‡ Ecclus. xxiii. 18 &c

and very often causeth, (as the same Wise Man expresseth it,*) “that they who promised to drive away terrors and troubles from others, became sick themselves of fear.”

But secondly; *there are many who know they do ill, but hope to repent, and be forgiven, before the judgments of God overtake them.*

Those who thus delude themselves, and speak thus of repentance, know very little what *repentance* is; and hardly imagine what a bitter cup they are preparing for themselves, if ever they should repent, *which is very uncertain.*

Fear of punishment hanging over our heads may help us to counterfeit repentance, but does not always produce *true repentance.* Pharaoh himself, when he feared his destruction to be at hand, cried out, “I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.”† But, after all, here was no true repentance.

It will be sufficient to show the extreme folly of depending upon such repentance, while we continue in sin, by asking a few short questions.

Can you, do you suppose, repent when you please?

Do not you take the ready way to provoke God to harden your heart, so that it will be impossible for you ever to repent?

Will your repentance, are you sure, hinder the judgments of God from falling upon you?

May not God, *supposing you shall repent*, forgive you in the next world, and yet make you dearly pay for your presumption in this? In short, whoever sins wilfully, in hopes that by repentance hereafter all shall be well with him, doth in effect resolve as follows:—that some time or other he will be heartily sorry for what he is going to do;—that he will wish he had never done it;—that he will be ashamed, and weep bitterly;—that he will loathe and abhor himself;—that he will be afflicted, and mourn, and weep for the evil that he is going to commit, &c.

But this is but one part of repentance: he must, moreover, (as the Apostle bids the faithful penitent,‡) “go boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy.”

Now, if any man can hope, that he *can with confidence hereafter, go to the throne of grace*, without a resolution of forsaking his sins at present, and quitting all occasions of them, he must hope without reason and without promise.

That repentance is a thing highly acceptable to God;—that God of his great mercy will accept of our repentance instead of a perfect obedience;—that God is *long-suffering,—giveth time and space* for repentance,—doth not hastily execute his judgments,—is not willing that *any should perish*; these are all undoubted truths. But that he will be merciful where men are obstinate;—that we should offend him at present in hopes of ap-

* Wisd xvii 8

† Exod ix 27

‡ Heb vi. 16.

peasing him hereafter: God forbid that such thoughts should come into a Christian's heart: God forbid that any Christian should suffer such thoughts to lodge there!

But, thirdly; there is another delusion, which is not less common, or less dangerous: *when people fancy that it is not possible for them to avoid either the sin, or the punishment that attends it.*

This has been an old and a wicked complaint against God. The son of Sirach* justly reproves all that speak after this manner: "Say not thou, he hath caused me to err, for he hath no need of the sinful man." And yet wicked men are very apt to say this, and to excuse themselves; *this was my lot, and I could not avoid it.*

Now, thus far they are in the right; namely, God has ordained,—that every sin shall have its due reward;—that the wicked shall be taken in their own traps;—that the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;—that drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags;—that riches got by vanity shall be diminished;—*that he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.*

But to say that God has ordained men to sin, when he hath expressly declared, *that he desireth not the death of a sinner;—that he would have all men to be saved;—that it is purely because men will not retain God in their knowledge, that God gives them over to a reprobate mind, to work all wickedness with greediness.* After this, to excuse themselves, by pretending a necessity of sinning, will by no means lessen their sin or their punishment.

The next delusion we took notice of was this;—*that because some have escaped the judgments of God in this world, others are thereby encouraged not to fear them.*

But if people would but consider, they would see, that since sin must be punished either in this life, or in the life to come, a sinner has no reason to rejoice or to harden himself in wickedness, because God does not call him to an account here.

St. Paul reasons after another manner:† "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the word," namely, to eternal punishments. So that whenever a man is sensible that he has offended God, if he would be thought a child of God, he ought to expect, and be thankful for his fatherly chastisement.

Directly contrary to this is the way of wicked men: if they are chastened, they repine; if no evil befalls them, they are hardened. Unhappy men! whom neither *prosperity* can invite, nor *adversity* force, to fear God.

The last delusion is that of those who are resolved not to think of a judgment to come; and who, if they can but escape in this world, are not concerned for an after-reckoning. But will this

* Ecclus. xv. 12.

† 1 Cor. xi. 32.

secure us? Are we sure we shall not be accountable, because we have not thought of such an account? It is impossible to describe the folly of such a way of reasoning.

Pray let us make the experiment in matters of less moment: let us try, for instance, whether by such an indifference as this is, we can keep ourselves from poverty or from death? Whether a spendthrift is farther off ruin because he does not think of it? Let us also consider what St. Paul saith to this purpose: *—"If we believe not, yet, God abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself:" that is, what God has appointed *will* come to pass, though all the world should resolve not to believe it.

This was exactly the case of the old world. They were forewarned of the approaching flood, but not one would lay this to heart; and what was the consequence, but that they all perished in their iniquity?—So that *you see* what will be the consequence of sin, though *we* should altogether hold our peace, though *you* should altogether refuse to hear us.

If you have sinned against the Lord, your sin will surely find you out;—that the world may be convinced, that God governs it in truth and justice, and that he sees all things that are done under the sun; that good men may be reclaimed by his fatherly corrections; that wicked men may be left without excuse;—and that all may be awakened into a due care of their ways, that they may avoid what will otherwise certainly come upon them.

I will conclude the whole with these short observations:—*First*; that since God has, in all ages and upon all sorts of people, given so many instances of his severe displeasure against sin, it is the greatest folly and presumption *to sin*, depending upon the goodness of God, or in hopes that our being called by *his* name will excuse us from punishment.—*2dly*; that we ought not to repine, if, when our sin has found us out, we receive the just reward of our iniquities; but, with a humble submission to God's will, be well pleased that our punishment is not reserved to the next world.—*3dly*; that since all afflictions are designed in mercy to better us, the best use we can make of them is to search our ways, see wherein we have offended; and, by a sincere repentance, endeavour to appease the anger of God; or, in our Saviour's words and advice, "to sin no more, lest a worse evil come."—*Lastly*, and above all things, let us consider, that however well we may *escape*, or *bear* afflictions *here*; yet, if we do not sincerely repent us of our sins, our sins will *one day* find us out, and overtake us, when God shall judge the world in righteousness, and give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings, whether they have been good or bad.

Now, may God, of his infinite mercy, turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved. May we ever

acknowledge the *hand* and the *justice* of God, in whatever his providence bringeth upon us:—and whatever befalls us in this world, may we, by a timely repentance, prevent and avert the wrath to come, for Jesus Christ's sake.—To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, now and forever. *Amen.*

HOSEA X. 12.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy.

HE that hath sown the seeds of righteousness most plentifully, must look for his harvest of glory only from the mercy of God. He that is richest in good works, must sue for heaven, in the quality of a poor worthless creature, that needs infinite mercy to bring him thither; mercy to pardon his sins antecedent to his good works; mercy to forgive the sins and defects in his works; mercy to advance his works (being though supposed never so perfect yet finite and temporary) to the possibility of attaining an infinite and endless reward. He must confess, with St. Paul, that "*eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ,*" that it is the rich purchase of Christ's most precious blood, by which alone a covenant of eternal life was established upon the gracious condition of "*faith working by love,*" that it was the grace of the Divine Spirit, promised in the same covenant, that prevented him, and co-operated with him, and continually assisted and followed him in all his good works. And consequently, that though his crown of glory be a "*crown of righteousness,*" that is of God's righteousness, whereby he is obliged to make good his own covenant, yet that it is a "*crown of mercy*" too, because that covenant itself was a covenant of infinite grace and mercy.

And if the best of men, after all the good works they have done, or can do, need mercy, infinite mercy to save them, what a miserable condition are they in who have no good works at all to show, but, on the contrary, a large catalogue of wicked works, unrepented of, to account for! We may say in this sense with St. Peter, "*If the righteous scarcely shall be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" Certainly even the mercy of God cannot save this man because his holiness will not suffer him. For though our good works are not required to make us capable of meriting heaven, (that being impossible for us,) yet they are absolutely necessary to make us fit objects for infinite mercy to bestow heaven on; or, in the excellent words of St. Paul, to "*make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*" To which inheritance, reader, God, of his infinite mercy, bring you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

4

ON FRAUD:

A

SERMON.

BY THE LATE
THOMAS WILSON, D.D.

BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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ON
F R A U D.

GENESIS xliii. 12.

*And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.**

A man of justice and integrity in his dealings is a character very desirable; and most people are apt to claim it *as their right*. On the other hand, there are so many ways of forfeiting this character, without a man's being exposed to the world for his dishonesty; nay, very often without taking notice of it himself; that one cannot be too earnest with people to consider this matter a little more seriously; if it were but to convince them how often they claim a character which they are not always *careful to deserve*.

But then, when it is considered that *for every act of injustice* a man is accountable to God; and that *restitution*, where it can be, must be made, as we hope for salvation; though it is a duty which people are very hardly persuaded to submit to:—these things considered, it is every body's concern to *know*, and to *avoid*, a sin of so much *deceit* and *danger*.

Now, there are several parts of *injustice*, or ways of *forfeiting the character of an honest man*, which I shall now insist upon; such are, the taking what is another man's right, by secret or open force, that is, by *theft* or *robbery*; by *oppression*, when he is not able to contend with us; or by *extortion*, when his necessities force him to submit to the hardest terms we think fit to impose upon him:—these are all crimes of so ill fame, that all people pretend to *abhor* them; the laws are *severe* in punishing them; and such as are *guilty*, are, for the most part, convinced they do ill.

But then there are *acts of injustice*, which though they are not so *barefaced*, yet are as evil in the sight of God, as *ill-becoming an honest man, and a Christian, and as hard to be repented of*, as the former; such are, the taking advantage of men's igno-

* See Lev. xix. 13; xxv. 14. Prov. xxii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 8. 1 Thess. iv. 6

ON FRAUD.

rance or mistakes; over-reaching them in bargains, or in suits of law; imposing upon their belief by a pretended sincerity, and then making a hand of their simplicity:—these, and such as these, are the sins I would endeavour to set in a true light; that all *good men* may *avoid* them, and that all *evil men* may *repent* of them.

Now, the text I have chosen for this discourse is an instance of great integrity. It is the direction and command of Jacob to his sons; who, returning out of Egypt, where they had been to buy corn, and finding the moneys which they had before taken with them, packed up, and returned with the rest of their goods, were greatly surprised, and at a loss what to think of so uncommon an incident: in the mean time, their father orders them what to do: “Take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.”

In these words there are *two duties* of great importance expressly set down:—*Peradventure it was an oversight.* Here is a direction *never to take advantage of other peoples’ mistakes, negligence, or ignorance, &c.* *Take double money in your hand, &c.* Here is *restitution* expressly required. Of which *two duties, and the sins that are contrary to them*, I will endeavour, by the assistance of God’s good Spirit, so to speak, as that your time may not be altogether lost in hearing them explained.

I. To begin with the first of these duties.—Now, there being a world of practices very dishonest, and yet people make a shift to live in them without either *public reproach*, or *private regret*; it will, therefore, be proper to consider, how they will be able to justify themselves before the JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH.

Peradvanture it was an oversight; and, therefore, we must not take our advantage of it. This was Jacob’s rule.—Let us see how far this rule ought to oblige *all honest men*; and how well it is observed.—Now, people may not see their interest, but overlook their rights several ways; and to take advantage of these circumstances would be manifest injustice.—For instance: if a man is in drink, he is, in the very language of the world, *overseen*; and if in such circumstances he happen to fall into ill hands, and make a bargain, it is ten to one but he heartily repents of what he has done; and very often his family smarts for it. Now a good man, when he sees this, would reason just as Jacob did; *it was an oversight*, and you shall not suffer by it.

But is this the practice of the world?—Very far from it. And though the Apostle expressly declares,* “That the Lord is the avenger of all such as go beyond or defraud another in any matter;” yet people will not easily quit a good bargain, for any law of God, if the laws of man will not force them to it.

To proceed:—How easily may a poor man, who has a right.

* 1 Thess. iv. 6.

eous cause, *mistake* in defending it. But will *his oversight* give me a right to *that*, to which, in truth, I had no just title before I made this advantage of his weakness or poverty? Or can any body think that, because the *injustice* is done in the face of a court, it is less a crime than if it had been done on the high road?

To feed a man with moneys, or to help to run him into debt, by encouraging him to borrow *when he has no occasion*, that I may get a better bargain of his estate when he shall be forced to sell it; this should seem, by the commonness of it, to be no great crime. But pray does the man know what he is doing? If he does not, *I take advantage of his weakness*; I help to ruin him, and perhaps his family; and if *he* is really *guilty* of a sin in squandering away the inheritance of his forefathers, it is impossible *I* should be *guiltless*.

“He that flattereth his neighbour,” saith Solomon,* “spreadeth a net for his feet.” It is possible for a man, by fair speeches, to make his neighbour overlook his own interest; but then, *to take any ill advantage of a man*, because he has an opinion of *my judgment and integrity*, is a wickedness which God will certainly avenge, though no law on earth can call a man to an account for it.—Because it is less hazarding to wrong orphans than older people, is it, therefore, less criminal? No sure: so far from it, that God declares himself concerned in the cause of the fatherless and the widow; that he will undertake and vindicate their cause against those that oppress them. And why? Why, because they have none else to help them. For which *very reason* a man should be very fearful of taking advantage of the *weaknesses* or *oversights*, of such helpless people, because such people have a right, and a promise, of redress from God. “Remove not the old landmark, nor enter into the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.”† How often do *wills* and other *writings of moment*, fall into the hands of such as thereby have an opportunity of wronging their neighbours! And people that will make use of such an opportunity do generally think, that this is a less offence than *stealing*. But for what reason? Why, only because for *stealing* (if a man is caught) he will be in danger of being put in the states’ prison; while at the worst he will only be called a dishonest man, if the other be discovered. And yet the crimes are equally forbidden, equally unjust and dangerous in the sight of God; whose judgment will be according to right, and not according to the false opinions of men.

A man who borrows moneys, which he knows he cannot repay, plainly takes an advantage of his creditor’s ignorance of *his* circumstances. It is probable he may fancy himself less guilty than if he had stolen so much, or taken it by force; but he

* Prov. xxix. 5

† Prov. xxiii. 10, 11

would not think so, if the laws had made these two crimes equally penal; as they are in truth equally unjust in the sight of God and man. There are too many who will make no scruple of imposing upon their neighbour's ignorance in passing of bad moneys, who yet would startle at the thoughts of counterfeiting the current coin. I question whether such people have considered how near akin these two crimes are to one another.

To proceed: if a man will take all advantages which the very laws allow, he will very often do great injustice; and in good conscience make himself liable to *restitution*. For instance:—a man, in settling his estate, which he may righteously do, *forgets some formality which the law requires*. Now, may I honestly go about to break this settlement? No, surely. Why, what then was the law made for? Why, purely to prevent frauds. Then, say you, he may be relieved in chancery. But shall I give a man the trouble and the expense of law, when I believe beforehand that he has a right in conscience? A man must love the world more than the commands of God that will do so.

The *very same* must be said of *unjust prescriptions*, which yet the laws allow of. Not that length of time *can* give any man a *right* which he knows he had not from the beginning, but because there would be no end of lawsuits, if people were to be disturbed forever. The law, therefore, does what is best for the public in general, and leaves it to *private men* to act as they will answer to God and a good conscience. It is too common for people to *conceal*, and to *keep*, what they have found. People do not surely consider, that there is an *express law of God* against such practices; but they will find very particular *precepts* and *directions* touching this matter, in the 22d chapter of Deuteronomy. But do these precepts oblige *us*? Yes, sure: unless you suppose that God required of the Jews to be strictly honest, and that Christians may do what they please.

In short: it would be a difficult matter to reckon up the many deceits that may be practised without being liable to be called to an account. But the *sins of injustice*, which are *most common*, and *least taken notice of*, are such as are committed in the way of *trade* and *bargains*. The Wise Man has given us fair warning of this: * “As a nail,” saith he, “sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.” And therefore, a man, who *desires to keep a good conscience*, will be very watchful over himself where he has warning beforehand of the danger he is in; and will be glad to have *such rules* to walk by, as he is sure will not deceive him. Such is that of our blessed Saviour's: *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*† Which though a very general rule, yet by a well-meaning Christian may be applied to all our dealings with one another. A man, for instance, who

* Ecclus. xxvii. 2.

† Matt. vii. 12

sets this rule before his eyes, will hardly put off damaged or dis-tempered goods for sound; will hardly take advantage of the ignorance of the buyer; will use no deceits to raise the price, or set off the value of what he desires to sell.

I do not here mention *false weights and measures; oppressing the poor; buying or selling of stolen goods; using oaths and lies to deceive* those with whom they deal. Those that do any of these things *know that they do ill*; and all the rules of the Gospel will be of no use to them, so long as they do not believe them. But for the sake of such as really desire to make *a conscience of their ways*, one would endeavour to make their way *plain and safe*, and their consciences easy upon good grounds.

Now, *gain* being the *end* of trade, and every man having a *right* to a reasonable advantage, of which he himself must *very often* be the *sole judge*, he lieth under a great temptation of being favourable to his own interest, and of overlooking that of others; to prevent which, these considerations should always be present with men of business:—"that he that maketh haste to be rich can hardly be innocent;"*—that every man has a *right* to be dealt with *fairly*;—that all depends upon God's blessing;—that the fear of wanting what is necessary, is the fear of infidels, who know not God;—and *that a man's life and happiness consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*.

When a man can consider such truths as these seriously, he is then *disposed* for saving instruction; he will easily hearken to the *rules of religion*; and a *few rules* will serve to direct him to keep a good conscience in the way of business. I shall recommend one very plain rule, which will go a great way towards directing every conscientious man how to act safely with respect to *gain*; and that is, *to take such a gain, advantage, or consideration, as the person with whom I deal would be satisfied with, if he knew my business as well as I do, and the reasons which oblige me to take such a profit*. That this is a safe and good rule in trade, is pretty plain from matter of fact; for whenever two persons deal together, who both understand their business well, a few words serve their turn: he that sells asks a reasonable gain, and he that buys sees it is fit he should have what he asks *all things considered*. Now, if men would but make this their rule, when they deal with such as are ignorant; it would prevent a great deal of guilt, which, the Wise Man saith, is almost inseparable from buying and selling.

There are certainly secrets in dealing, which every body cannot be acquainted with: but, to prevent my being partial to myself, I may suppose the person I deal with knew the reasons why I insist upon such a price; and then, if I am conscious to myself that I need not be ashamed of such *gain*, I have a good testimony of my honesty, and my conscience will never reproach me

of injustice. But if, instead of doing so, I take what I can get, make a hand of the *negligence*, *ignorance*, or *simplicity*, of those with whom I have to do, I practise what is *unjust*; I have no regard to the laws of the Gospel: and if ever I do repent of this sin, I make myself liable to one of the most difficult duties of Christianity, that of *restitution* and *satisfaction*; without which my repentance will never deliver me from the sad consequences of such injustice.

But to prevent, as much as may be, any occasion for the *exercise of the duty of restitution*, I would lay before you, 1st, the greatest of these sins; 2dly, the temptations which lead to them, that we may avoid them; 3dly, such considerations as are most likely to keep us from running into them.—And first, we are not to judge of the *greatness of the crimes*, by the opinion the world has of them. At this rate, we should not only make a jest of taking advantage of and cheating one another, as is too common; but even the sin of *adultery*, and some other crimes, which a Christian should not mention without horror, would be accounted *failings*, rather than sins which wills hut us out of heaven. But we are to judge of the greatness of crimes, by the *authority* that forbids them; by the *punishment* threatened; and by the *mischiefs* that attend them.

Now, all sins of this kind are plainly against the *great rule of justice*, given by our Saviour: “whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” People are very sensible of any such injury done to themselves; and give very ill names to such as *overreach* them. This shows, that men do not think these *small faults*, when they themselves are the sufferers. And then, it is said expressly of *these sins*, “that the Lord is the avenger of all such;”* perhaps because men are too apt to overlook them: and in another place, St. Paul saith, “that the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.”

Lastly; the mischiefs of these sins are very apparent: they harden the conscience; they provoke and encourage others to sin; and, what is worst of all, it is seldom that people think it necessary to repent of them.

Christians are for the most part convinced, that *great* and *crying* sins, such as are liable to infamous punishments in this world: that *these* are to be particularly repented of, or *no pardon is to be expected*: but the sins of fraud are often committed without remorse, and without punishment; or easily *forgotten*, and, therefore, seldom *truly repented of*; which, in the end, makes them as damnable sins as those that people seem to be more afraid of.

Let us, in the second place, consider *the temptations to this vice*, and what it is that occasions people to take advantage of their neighbour, with so little regret and fear of punishment.—

* 1 Thess. iv. 6.

Is it ignorance? That cannot be : there is not the most ignorant person, but knows well enough, when any body wrongs him, that *that* man does ill.—Is it for *want of faith*, and that people do not believe that they are to give an account for their injustice? Few people will own such a degree of infidelity.—Is it for *want*? No, sure ; for it is too often that those that have the least need are aptest to wrong and overreach their neighbour.—Is it an *immoderate love for their children*, and that people will venture at all rather than not leave them all they can? That cannot be the reason where people have none to provide for ; or where they are undutiful, and take ill ways.

What then is it which shall tempt men to run such hazards? Why, *an excessive love for the world*.—People think they have still *too little* ; that *more* would make them *more happy* ; this makes them forget *the account* they must give, and *those rules* which are prescribed by God for the peace and good government of the world : this makes them overlook their neighbour, as if he had not a *right* to be *fairly dealt with* : this makes them forget that *death* is not far from them, when they shall part with all they have unfairly gotten ; and *if they know their danger*, will wish a thousand times they had *starved* sooner than done the least injustice.

Ye see how much this sin is to be feared : and that it is possible for people, by increasing their substance, to increase their damnation. Let me, therefore, recommend to you *a few considerations*, to make you abhor so base a vice.—Let us seriously think of it *that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do* ; so that what may be an oversight to man, cannot be so to God. Nay, a man may be shut out of heaven for that very thing which no law on earth could take hold of him for ; or, if he repents of it, will cost him dear before he can be forgiven.

Believe it, Christians ! the Lord is nigh them that are wronged, to do them justice, when they call upon him in the bitterness of their soul : and it will be no advantage to a man to have doubled his talents, when he has doubled his guilt and his punishment. Even your posterity shall suffer for your fraud ; and you are only laying up a treasure of judgments for those very children which you are so passionately fond of. God will lay up the iniquities of sinners for their children, saith Job.* So that it were much better they were left to the wide world, than with any thing that is got by deceit.

Depend upon it, neither your *care* in *settling* what you will leave, nor your *advice* to your heir, nor *lands*, nor *securities*, nor *bonds*, nor *locks*, can preserve what you shall get by fraud : no, *not repentance itself*.—That is hard, you will say : will not God pardon me upon *my repentance*? Why, you think, perhaps

that repentance consists in confessing your fault, and asking God's pardon, *without making restitution*: as if a thief, who has got enough to live upon, should ask God's pardon, and then think all is well and forgiven.—Who does not see the wickedness of such an opinion?

To conclude: if we would follow the good Patriarch's advice, and be innocent, it is necessary that we have *his faith* and *affections*. As how? Why, the Apostle tells us, "that he looked for a city, whose builder and maker is God;"* that is, he did not so much concern himself with what he might get in this short life, but he was for securing, *by all means*, an inheritance in heaven. He kept his *eye* and his *heart* there; and this made him despise all unjust advantages that came in his way, knowing *that this was not the world he was made for*.—And in truth, unless this consideration be always present with us, the world has so many temptations to draw us out of the way, that it will be impossible for a man to resist them. *Self-interest*,—*a present advantage*,—*the slight opinion the world has of such crimes*,—will all contribute to draw a man into a snare who is not steadfastly purposed in his heart, that no worldly advantage shall prevail with him to forfeit his inheritance in heaven: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"† We have not now time to consider particularly *what is to be done*, where people have by design or unwillingly fallen into this error. The text directs us to *restitution*, as the only means to preserve the character of honest men, and of Christians: and justice and conscience say the same thing. It is a *difficult*, and it is a *necessary* duty: these two considerations should prevail with people to beware of a sin which requires so *ungrateful* a remedy.

And may the fear and grace of God be with us to preserve us from injustice of all kinds, and that we may love him in truth and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

* Heb. xi. 10

† Mark viii. 36

ROM. xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

MOREOVER love to our neighbour is a debt unto *God*, and we are obliged to it in obedience to the divine will and in imitation of the divine nature. Our duty and gratitude to God require us to employ the talents, which he hath given us, for the benefit and advantage of mankind; for our goodness extendeth not to God, and we have no other way of being serviceable to him, or making any suitable return for all the blessings of life, but by communicating of the good things we enjoy to our fellow-creatures: and whoever oppresseth or despiseth any man may very properly be said, in the language of Solomon, (Prov. xiv. 31,) "to reproach his Maker." If there was no divine revelation, yet the voice of reason, and the whole frame of nature, every thing without us and every thing within us loudly proclaim this to be one of the primary and fundamental laws: and God, who is himself all love and goodness, cannot but be pleased with those of his creatures who shall endeavour to copy after him in these amiable perfections. Nothing certainly can be a greater honour and advancement to human nature, than to imitate and resemble the divine, (Luke vi. 36,) to "be merciful as our Father also is merciful;" (Matt. v. 48,) "to be perfect even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect," (1 John iv. 16,) "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

We are still more particularly obliged to it as we are *Christians*, and our holy religion hath carried the arguments and motives to universal love and charity higher than ever they were carried by any system of morality or religion in the world. For we are not only obliged to it by the ties of common humanity, as we are men, and partakers of the same human nature, and perhaps members of the same body politic; but we are farther to look upon ourselves as brethren in a more eminent and peculiar manner, being all the children of God in Christ, all partakers of the same blessed Spirit, all heirs of the same eternal inheritance, all members of the same spiritual body in Christ Jesus; and (1 Cor. xii. 26,) "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." We are not only obliged to it by the general example of God's love and goodness manifested in the works of the creation, preservation, and providence; but we have likewise a more particular example in the singular love of God and of Christ discovered in the redemption and restoration of lost mankind to everlasting happiness. For (1 John iv. 10, 11.) "herein is love

not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another," (iii. 16,) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We are not only obliged to it by the will and command of God, collected from the nature of things, and from the nature of man, and from the nature and attributes of God; but it is moreover the express law and command of God, pressed and inculcated with the greatest plainness and emphasis, in almost every page of the Gospel; and it is made the distinguishing mark and criterion of a true Christian; for "by this" says our blessed Saviour (John xiii. 35,) "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." It is therefore called by the Apostle (1 Tim. i. 5,) "the end of the commandment," (Rom. xiii. 10,) "the fulfilling of the law," (Col. iii. 14,) "the bond of perfectness:" and all other excellences and pretences to religion whatever are vain without it, for (1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2,) "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing." Through the merits of Christ it will atone for lesser offences, will (1 Pet. iv. 8,) "cover the multitude of sins: and in the next world the principal inquiry will be, what works of mercy and charity we have done to our brethren, and our Saviour promises to reward them as done to himself; for (Matt. xxv. 40,) "verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Wherefore "owe no man any thing but to love one another." Avoid the former, that you may be the better able to perform the latter; for a man involved in debt can have little or nothing to bestow in charity. Be generous, but be generous of what is your own. Charity is a most divine quality, but there can be no true charity without justice. First do justice, and then show mercy. The one is not sufficient without the other: (Mic. vi. 8,) "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It is a very short, but very complete character of a bad and a good man, that is given by the royal psalmist, and with that I will conclude, (Psal. xxxvii. 21,) "The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the righteous showeth mercy and giveth."



NO GOOD WORD OR DEED IS EVER LOST.

“Blest is the man whose softening heart
Feels all another’s pain;
To whom the supplicating eye
Is never raised in vain.”

“Still we read thy word declaring
Mercy, Lord, thine own decree;
Mercy, every sorrow sharing,
Warms the heart resembling thee.

“PHILIP, cousin Philip! don’t!” The speaker was a little girl, scarcely five years old, who was sitting on a stone step of a farm-house door, watching very intently the motions of a boy four or five years older than herself. And what was Philip Dale doing? Why he had found a poor little stray kitten, which had wandered into the court-yard, and, boy like, was driving it hither and thither, shouting, throwing sticks and pebbles at it; while the hunted, terrified little creature ran one way and another, mewing piteously, and every sound went to the heart of the compassionate little child who heard it. At last she could endure it no longer; and running to her cousin with eyes filled with tears, and a voice which trembled from its very earnestness, she repeated,—
“Don’t, Philip! it is God’s kitty!”

The boy stopped, and looked in her face in amazement; then, suddenly seizing the fugitive, which had taken refuge in a tree, he laid it gently in the child's arms, and saying, "There's your kitten, Clara," he turned and left the yard. Little Clara ran back into the house, showed her treasure to her aunt and sister Fanny, and asked and obtained permission to keep it. Fanny kindly took upon herself the office of making it clean. She softly washed off the dirt, brushed the fur dry, and brought from the kitchen a saucer of milk to feed it; and in no long time the kitten was lying contentedly on Clara's lap, purring loudly, and quite as happy as the little girl herself.

Nothing was seen of Philip till dinner time, and when he came in, he cast a sly glance at Clara's new pet, as if he almost feared it would complain of him. But he was safe from any reproof save that of his own conscience; for kitten could not tell, Clara would not, and no one else knew anything of the matter. After dinner he tried to make friends with Clara, by offering the kitten some bits of meat, which she took very gladly, and lapped his hand in gratitude; while Clara looked up with a face so bright and smiling, it was plain she had forgotten the affair of the morning. Philip set off for school, and seeing a robin, picked up a stone to throw at it, when a sudden thought checked him, and the stone fell from his hand.

"I suppose Clara would say that is God's robin, too," he said, half aloud; "and the squirrels and the cows, and everything else. What a queer little thing she is! won't even kill a fly, because she says she couldn't make it alive again, if she should." And the boy went on pondering the matter. He was not a cruel boy, naturally. He loved his parents and his gentle little cousin dearly; and no one could be kinder to the horse, and the fowls, and his own dog, Bruno, than was Philip Dale. But he had learned from his companions the very wicked habit.

of tormenting animals for sport, without giving a thought to the pain he was inflicting; and though his mother's soft "Don't do so, my son," always stopped him for the time, she was not often present when he was indulging himself in such amusements. Not one word said Philip of the subject which had occupied his thoughts all day, until evening, when Fanny had gone to put Clara to bed, and all was quiet. Then he came to his mother, and laying his head in her lap, and looking up into her clear, loving eyes, told her of his conduct in the morning, and of Clara's entreaty. And Mrs. Dale, entering with ready sympathy into her boy's thoughts and feelings, conversed with him about the animals, and his duties to them, and so deepened the impression on his mind, that Philip resolved never again to ill treat any animal; and he kept his resolution, too.

Some months after, when Clara had been for some time at her city home, Mr. Dale asked Philip, one bright morning, if he could go to town for him to do some errands. They lived within two or three miles from the town, and it was by no means a long walk for a healthy, active boy, and Philip joyfully consented to the proposal. He took his basket and went merrily on, whistling the prettiest tunes he knew, and speaking with the numerous acquaintances he met, and in good time he reached his destination. As he went forward, he chanced to spy a boy whom he knew, cruelly beating a dog, which howled with pain. Philip crossed the street.

"What is the matter, Jerry?" he asked. "What has Ponto been doing?"

Jerry glanced round at him; but Philip's pleasant face and kind tone disarmed his anger, and he answered rather sullenly, "He stole my breakfast, and I'll punish him for it." And he raised his stick again, but Philip caught his arm.

"I wouldn't beat him, Jerry; he was hungry, poor fellow, and didn't know he was getting your break-

fast. Here's a nice luncheon mother gave me ; take it, Jerry, for I had my breakfast long ago ; and don't beat Ponto any more. He is one of God's creatures, you know, and we must not abuse them."

Jerry hesitated, took the offered gift, and began to eat ; for, as Philip suspected, he was as hungry as the dog ; and after a minute he stooped down, and patting the poor creature, shared his meal with him, while his young friend, pleased to see it, ran merrily on to do his errands in town, without giving a thought to the loss of his luncheon. Philip little knew how much good he had done. While he talked with Jerry, two men passed in different directions : one a ragged looking man, with a face bearing the marks of intemperance ; the other, handsomely dressed, with a pleasant, open countenance, and cheerful smile. This was Frank Howard, a thriving young merchant ; the other was Joe Dennis, a poor laborer, who made himself still poorer by wasting his earnings in liquor. Howard glanced at the man, as he passed, with disgust and scorn ; and Dennis, on his part, looked at the young merchant with a despairing envy. "I might have been as well off as he, perhaps," was his thought ; "his father and mine were schoolmates and playfellows once ; but it's no use now." It was just as they met and passed each other, at the very spot where the boys were talking, that Philip had said the last words to Jerry.

"One of God's creatures," repeated Howard, involuntarily turning to look after the drunkard. "*One of my brethren, then ; can I do nothing to save him ?*" One instant he hesitated, then slowly followed Dennis.

"One of God's creatures," said poor Joe to himself. "Well, I suppose I'm that, only no one seems to think so ; and why should they ? I'm worse than that brute, for I take the food from my wife and children !" He paused, for he was close by a dram-shop, where he had too often stopped. "No, *I won't,*" he

said, energetically; "I'll try once more to leave off. One of God's creatures! If he takes care of the dumb beast, why shouldn't he of us? I don't know who else will."

Joe marched on with a firmer step, for his resolve to do right had given him courage, and soon reached his wretched home. Mrs. Dennis looked up hastily, and one or two children glanced timidly at their father. "I haven't taken a drop to-day, Martha," said he, "and by God's help I won't again. Here, Joey, take this fourpence and get a loaf of bread." Mrs. Dennis, too happy to speak, could only throw her arms around her husband's neck and cry. "Don't, Martha, don't," said the poor man. "You've nothing to be so glad about; for that's the last cent I've got in the world, and I don't know where the next will come from. Ah, yes!" answering her broken words, "it's easy for you to say, 'Trust in the Lord,' for you're a good woman; but it isn't easy for me."

Just then a knock was heard at the door, and Frank Howard walked in. "Does not Joseph Dennis live here?" he asked. "Are you at liberty to-day, Mr. Dennis, and could you do some jobs at my store? The man I have heretofore employed has left town, and I must get some one to supply his place. Will you come to-day and try? Perhaps we may make some agreement."

Poor Joe Dennis! he could almost have worshipped Howard as an angel from heaven. He looked one way and another, and finally burst into tears. "I'll come, Mr. Howard, I'll come; it is very good of you, for there isn't many who would employ a drunkard like me; but I mean to be sober in future. I was just telling Martha that I could get no work, and we'd got to starve, may be; and she, good soul, said the Lord would provide. I believe, Mr. Howard, sir, God sent you to us just now."

"I have no doubt He did," answered Howard, gravely, who, having closely followed Dennis, had

seen and heard all that passed before he entered. "Mr. Dennis, if you will go to my store, and say to my clerk, Mr. Reid, that I sent you, he will employ you; and I will be there directly myself." And as soon as Dennis had left the house, the young merchant turned to the happy, weeping wife, and putting five dollars into her hand, bade her regard it as a gift from heaven, and provide what she most needed, adding, with a smile, "Your husband will return hungry, no doubt; I should advise you to have a good dinner ready."

We need hardly say that this advice was followed, and that Dennis found a smoking dinner on the table when he returned at noon. But it may be necessary to add, that their new friend kept Joe in his employ, and aided his efforts at amendment, until, in a few years, the neat, nice dwelling, and comfortable, happy-looking family, which Dennis eagerly sought after his day's labors, bore slight resemblance to the cheerless hovel, and pale, starving faces he had left. Nor was this all: Frank Howard, having once tasted the pleasure of benevolence, could not resign the luxury of being the dispenser of God's bounty to others. And many were the hearts cheered, many the homes preserved, many the characters saved from ruin by his kindly and unsought assistance. He sought no public notice of his good deeds; he was pleased to labor in secret. But Philip Dale often wondered why Mr. Howard always spoke so kindly to him and invited him so frequently to his pleasant house. Philip never suspected that his kind care for a suffering animal had been the means of saving many human beings from worse suffering; and just as little did Clara think when she played with her kitten Friskie, now grown quite a cat, that her compassionate pleading for Friskie was the first link in a long chain of benevolent actions. Only believe that *no good word or deed is ever lost*; and, in His own good time, God will make it bring forth rich fruit.

HENRY AND HIS HALF DOLLAR.

HENRY — was the son of an industrious farmer in V—. He was prompt and active at work, and as active at play when he could get time for recreation. One day when he was about thirteen, he was at a mill in his father's neighborhood, and an old man who lived a few miles up the river, came to get a small quantity of flour on credit. The old man said his aged wife was sick, and he wanted a little flour to make her something that she could eat; but he had no money to pay for it, and was obliged to ask a credit for a few weeks. The miller positively refused to let him have the flour; and the poor old man, dispirited and sad, turned towards his home. He knew not what to do. He disliked to go to his neighbors and beg for bread; and he feared that if he asked for credit, he might meet with the same repulse the miller had given him.

Young Henry heard all that passed between the miller and the old man; and he saw him leave the mill for his home, without flour to make even a cake for his sick wife. He saw his sorrowful face and his tearful eye, and the boy's heart was touched. As soon as the old man was gone, Henry went to the miller, and begged him to send the poor man some flour; but he would not. "Then," said the generous hearted boy, "here is a half dollar—it is the only money I have in the world—give me its worth in flour, and I will give it to that poor man's wife."

The miller measured up the flour, and Henry took it on his shoulder, and away he went. He got tired and sat down and rested, and then he arose and pushed on, panting and tugging along with his load. At length he reached the poor man's cabin upon the bank of the mill-creek, just after the old man had

got home and told his sorrowful tale to his sick wife. He was sitting in the corner in deep dejection of spirits; but she, with humble confidence in God, had just said, "the Lord will provide." She did not murmur or complain, but told her husband to be of good courage, and not despond. Just at that moment Henry entered with his bag of flour, and gave it to the old man. The sick woman blessed him and prayed for him; the old man was too full to say a word, but shed tears of gratitude on the reception of the unexpected favor from the hands of his young benefactor.

Henry grew up to be a man. The Lord prospered him in business. He became wealthy, but never forgot the poor. He was always liberal in his donations for benevolent objects; but I have often heard him say, that the bag of flour which he gave to the poor sick woman when he was a boy, purchased with the only piece of money he had in the world, afforded him more real pleasure than any act of his life. This was a noble, generous deed. It augured well for the man; and he turned out to be all that such an act, at so early an age, indicated he would be. He was unselfish, kind hearted, and full of charitable deeds.



THE HEROIC MINER.

A POOR but pious miner in Cornwall was down deep in the earth with another miner sinking a shaft. They were blasting rocks, and their custom was, after the rock was charged, for one first to ascend in the bucket, and the other to wait until the bucket came down again, then ignite the fuse, get into the bucket, give the signal to the man above, and be drawn to the top before the explosion. In the present case, the train unexpectedly took fire. The fuse was hiss-

ing, both men rushed to the bucket, got in and gave the signal to hoist; but the man above could not draw them both. They at once saw their danger, both could not escape, and delay was death. One of the miners was pious. Looking for a moment at his companion, and stepping from the bucket, he said, "*Escape for thy life; in a few moments I shall be in heaven.*" The bucket was drawn up, and the man was safe.

Eager to know the fate of his magnanimous companion, he bent over the mouth of the shaft. Just then the explosion rumbled below; and a splinter struck him on the brow, leaving a mark he will carry to the grave. They soon commenced laboring among the fallen rocks to extricate the corpse. At last they heard a voice. Their friend was yet alive. They reached him, and found him without injury or scratch. All he could tell of the fearful scene was, that the moment his friend was gone, he sat down and took up a stone and held it before his face. When asked what induced him to let his companion escape, he replied, "*I believed my soul was safe; I was not so sure of his.*"

Now look at him who, to build a city called by his own name, sacrificed a hundred thousand men, and at this poor miner, who, to save the soul of his unconverted comrade, sat down there to be blasted to pieces, and say which is the true hero.



"IT COMES FROM ABOVE."

THERE was once in France a poor boy, who was called "Little Peter." He was an orphan, and begged his bread from door to door. He sang very prettily, and the people seldom sent him away empty-handed. It was an idle and uncomfortable life

which he led, but Peter had no one to care for him, and he did not know what else to do. He had the singular custom of saying on every occasion, "It comes from above." I will tell you why.

When his father was on his death-bed—if, indeed, he had a bed, for he was very poor—he said to his son, "My dear Peter, you will now be left alone, and many troubles you will have in the world. But always remember, that all comes from above; then you will find it easy to bear everything with patience."

Little Peter understood him, and in order not to forget the words, he often thought them aloud. He acknowledged every gift with the words, "It comes from above." As he grew up, he used to consider what the expression meant. He was intelligent enough to see, that as God rules the world, we may well believe of everything that happens in the way of his providence, "It comes from above."

This faith of Little Peter frequently turned out for his benefit. Once, as he was passing through the town, a sudden wind blew off a roof tile, which fell on his shoulder, and struck him to the ground. His first words were "It come from above." The bystanders laughed, and thought he must be out of his senses, for of course it could not fall from below; but they did not understand him. A minute after, the wind tore off an entire roof in the same street, which crushed three men to death. Had Little Peter gone on, he would probably have been at that moment just where the roof fell.

Another time, a distinguished gentleman employed him to carry a letter to a neighboring town, bidding him make all haste. On his way he tried to spring over a ditch, but it was so wide that he fell in, and was nearly drowned. The letter was lost in the mud, and could not be recovered. The gentleman was angry when Little Peter told him of his misfortune, and drove him out of doors with his whip. "It comes

from above," said Peter, as he stood on the steps. The next day the gentleman sent for him. "See here," said he, "there are two half crowns for you for tumbling into the ditch. Circumstances have so changed on a sudden, that it would have been a misfortune to me had that letter gone safely."

I could tell you much more about Peter. When he had become a great boy, he was still called "Little Peter." A rich gentleman who came into the town, having heard his story, sent for him, in order to give him something. When Little Peter entered the room, the Englishman said, "What think you, Peter: why have I sent for you?" "It comes from above," replied Peter. The answer greatly pleased the gentleman. After thinking awhile, he said, "You are right; I will take you into my service, and provide well for you. Will you agree to that?" "It comes from above," answered Peter; "God is very good to me; I will gladly go with you."

So the rich Englishman took him away. It was a good thing for the poor boy, who had been taught no trade. Long afterwards, we learned that when his master died, he left him a large sum of money to carry on his business, and that "Little Peter" was then a wealthy man in Birmingham. But he still said of every occurrence, "It comes from above."



6

THE OLD PATHS.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE SEASON OF LENT.

BY JOHN HENRY HOBART, D.D.

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THE OLD PATHS.

JEREMIAH vi. 16.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

THIS was the admonition of the Lord by his prophet, to the Jews, who had departed from the good old ways in which their fathers walked, and deviated into the paths of error and of sin. Like travellers who have lost their road, and are perplexed as to the course which they are pursuing, the Jews, involved in the mazes of error and iniquity, are exhorted to “stand in the ways;” to stop in their devious and dangerous career—to “see;” earnestly and solicitously to look around them, in order to find whether there are any who can direct them right—and for this purpose they are to “ask for the old paths;” for “the good way” in which their holy men of old had walked—and in this way to “walk;” and then, instead of the perplexity and disquietude which agitated them, secure in the confidence that they were pursuing those paths of truth and righteousness which were enlightened by God’s favour, and which conducted finally to his presence, they should “find rest to their souls.”

This admonition may at all times be seasonably addressed to Christians. For such is the imperfection of our nature, and so powerful is the dominion of temptation, that we often insensibly leave “the old paths,” the “good way,” in which we walked with integrity and with safety, and advance to a greater or less distance in the paths of error and of sin.

But it is not my design, at this time, to take up this admonition in this *general* view, with respect to Christian *doctrine* and *duty*. There are deviations from correct principles and practices, in reference to the *worship*, the *ministry*, and *ordinances* of the Church, to which we are at all times exposed; and with regard to *these*, the admonition will apply—

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, “where is the good way, and walk therein.”

At the present season,* then, which the Church wisely interposes, in the midst of the bustle of worldly cares and amusements, as a period of special examination and reflection; it may be well for us to "ask for the old paths;" for "the good way;" for those principles and practices which, in reference to the *worship*, the *ministry*, and the *institutions* of the Church, distinguished the Christians of former ages; and then seriously to consider whether we have deviated in any degree from them—and if so, without delay to return to them.

I. It was a good old principle, which placed the *prayers*, the *worship* of the Church, in a much *higher grade of estimation* than the *preaching* of the minister.

The prayers of the Church, are those acts by which we discharge the duty of homage to Almighty God, confess our sins unto him, humbly implore his pardon, and supplicate his favour. They are those sacred channels by which our devout affections ascend in holy hope, and love, and trust, to the Fountain of all perfection and blessedness; and through which flow in return the streams of his grace, his mercy and love, purifying, gladdening, and strengthening our hearts. He then who devoutly attends the prayers of the Church, discharges the high duties of homage to his Creator, Benefactor, and Redeemer, and excites and nourishes in his soul all those graces and virtues that fit him for the happiness of heaven. Prayer, indeed, is one of those acts, those inestimable privileges, those indispensable characteristics of the Christian, for the discharge of which, preaching is designed to excite and to fit him.

Important, then, as preaching may be as the *mean*, it cannot be of equal importance with that duty of prayer and homage, which is the *end* that it is designed to produce, and without which it will be utterly inefficacious. It is one, but not the sole mean of exciting and fitting us to that holy communion in prayer with the Father of our spirits, by which all holy graces and virtues are to be nourished and strengthened in our souls. For we may become sensible of the obligation of this duty, and fitted for the discharge of it, by reflection, and meditation, and pious reading. And it is easy to conceive, that he who by these exercises is led to the discharge of the duties of supplication and praise to Almighty God in the worship and ordinances of his holy temple, may obtain the divine favour and blessing, and be fitted for

* Lent.

heaven, even though he should be prevented from hearing a sermon through the whole course of his life.

As a mean, indeed, divinely constituted, of explaining, defending, and enforcing divine truth and Christian duty, preaching ought to be most highly valued. But it should not be *preferred* to the prayers and the praises of God's temple—those sacred acts which exalt the soul to those heavenly courts for which they prepare her, and unite us in blissful employment with that angelic company who cease not, day nor night, to worship before the throne of God—those elevating and cheering exercises, which made the Psalmist exclaim concerning God's house, "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand."*

In accordance with these views, we need not wonder that in the primitive church, while social prayers distinguished every assemblage of Christians, preaching was not considered at all times an indispensable exercise; and that in the Church from which we are descended, and even in our own, no order is made but for a sermon at *Morning Prayer*. The occurrence of more than one is merely usage—a usage, indeed, which circumstances render expedient, and which is highly edifying, but which the Church does not rank among her essential institutions.

It cannot be necessary for me, brethren, to point out how greatly, in this respect, modern Christians have wandered from the "good way;" and what undue preference is given to preaching, which, though an important exercise, is not to be compared with those public acts of devotion by which the soul is lifted, if I may so speak, from earth to heaven. This preference is so decidedly universal, that, in common estimation, preaching is considered as almost the sole purpose of assembling in the house of God; so that the act of going there is, in customary conversation, denoted by going to hear a particular preacher. And even among those of our own Church, where, whatever may be the defects of the preacher, her admirable liturgy secures to all who attend her courts the means of elevated and holy intercourse with heaven, we sometimes find this inestimable privilege entirely disregarded, and disappointment and dissatisfaction expressed because the sermon was not agreeable to them. Surely to such persons we may say—"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein."

II. As connected with the above, it was another good custom

* Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

regularly to *attend the worship* of the Church, even when there was *no sermon*.

For though preaching by sermons is an important, it is not the appropriate and the most important exercise of God's house. Prayer and praise are those indispensable and momentous duties, which, if discharged, preaching may or may not take place, as circumstances render expedient. Hence, while, in the primitive Church, Christians met daily for public worship, preaching was not always of daily occurrence. That Church, too, which in many respects is lamentably degenerated, in her corrupt and superstitious doctrines and observances, from the simplicity and purity of primitive times, yet in this respect resembles them; for numerous worshippers almost anticipate the dawn of day, to enter into her holy places—not to hear sermons, but to be present at the eucharistic sacrifice, and to offer to God their morning orisons: and in many countries the members of that Church in like manner raise, in her sacred temples, their evening song to the God who hath preserved them.

Alas! how have we wandered from "the good way!" We, of a Church who, preserving in this as in other respects the characteristics of her primitive origin, hath provided for the devotions of her members *daily morning* and *evening* prayer, can with difficulty assemble on the morning of two days in the week a few scattered worshippers, whom to exhort to confess and lament their sins and wickedness, and to whom to address the animating call—"O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation."

We are aware that the business of the world must be attended to; that domestic concerns must not be neglected; and that these may form a just excuse for the absence of some persons from those public devotions in which it is their duty, as it is their privilege, and will prove their edification and happiness, whenever it is in their power to join. But how many are there to whom this excuse will not apply! And surely even with the most busy, with those most oppressed with domestic concerns, *one hour* in the *week* might *sometimes* be spared for the purpose of holding, in this sacred temple, that converse with heaven by which the soul is fortified against the temptations, comforted under the trials, and strengthened for the discharge of the duties of a perplexing, troublesome, and often corrupting world.

III. In connexion with the above principles, it was a good cus-

tom for Christians to *attend the ministrations of their appropriate clergy.*

For this was essential to that "decency and order" with which the Apostle prescribes that all things "should be done" in the Church;* to that mutual harmony, esteem, and confidence, which should subsist between pastors and their flocks; and to that edification which is best secured by a regular attendance at a stated place of worship. Preference there may be, from the varying talents and tastes of men; preference there must be, for the performances of one minister above those of another; and those performances, under certain circumstances, and at proper seasons, may be the subjects of liberal criticism. But when this preference leads us to forsake our appropriate place of worship, with a view to obtain elsewhere ministrations more acceptable to us, can we say that we observe that decorum, that attention to the feelings even of the most humble, which, in the ordinary concerns of life, it would give us inexpressible pain to be supposed for a moment capable of violating? And when criticism, however just, is applied under circumstances, at a time and in a manner calculated to lessen the reputation of those whose usefulness and influence, not to say whose comfort, and perhaps temporal support depend upon the reputation which they enjoy in the community, may we not unintentionally commit an act of unkindness and injustice, of which we are not deliberately capable?

How pleasing and how interesting the character of the Christian, and how edifying his example, who, never seduced by the love of novelty, by caprice, or by personal gratification, always appears at *his place* in the sanctuary; surrounded by his family; at once the guide and the pattern of their devotions; always gratified with the worship, even though he may not find much to please or to edify in the sermon, and still disposed and solicitous to be pleased, and to be edified by that little; who, uncontaminated by those opinions which consider the house of God as a place where the fancy is to be excited, the taste gratified, and light feelings amused, regards the discharge of the duty of worshipping his Maker, and Benefactor, and Redeemer, as his principal object in the temple of the Lord. 'This is he who has sought the "old paths," the "good way," and who has walked therein.

IV. Further—it was a good custom *never to be absent on Sun-*

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

day, except when unavoidably prevented, from the *worship* of the Church, and always to be *present* at its *commencement*.

One day in the week being divinely set apart for religious worship, and sacred purposes, the observance of that day is a duty of indispensable obligation. And, in the purer period of the Church, when Christians were solicitous to snatch from the occupations even of the week, a portion of time, to render homage to their God and Saviour in his house of prayer, the duty of observing the Lord's Day would have been considered as only imperfectly discharged, by an attendance at the sanctuary during only a part of the day. And yet how little beyond this does the religious observance of Sunday extend among many Christians at the present period! Not to mention those who make no distinction between this and an ordinary day, except by the more quiet attention to some part of their worldly business, or the more undivided pursuit of their worldly pleasures; not to mention those who, from a regard to their character, and to the influence of their example, cannot bring themselves entirely to neglect the sacred duties of a day, on the proper observance of which, more than on any other circumstance, depend the religion, the morals, and the order of the community, and the best interests of society, and who, therefore, appear the *occasional* attendants at the sanctuary; not to mention those who, professing a regular attendance, yet often make it a mere matter of convenience, and permit some trivial circumstance, and perhaps some worldly business or gratification, occasionally to interrupt that attendance; are there not some, who, though usually participating at the *morning* duties of the sanctuary, never appear at its *afternoon* offering of prayer and praise? Surely it must appear, upon reflection, that the devotion of *one half of only one day in seven*, to the service of that Almighty Benefactor, on whom we are dependent for the life and the comforts of all our days, is but a very feeble tribute of gratitude, a very humble offering of homage.

The indulgence which in this respect is assumed by some, may with equal propriety be claimed by others. And if, then, the absence from the afternoon service of the Church be tested by the reasonable rule—"this which is done by me, may be done by others"—where is the individual who would justify in himself an indulgence, which, if *generally* practised, would leave in the afternoon of the day sacred to the public duties of religion, these courts destitute of worshippers? A considerable portion of the day which should be hallowed by acts of devotion, would then

be *universally* marked, as it is now among many, by scenes of private festive enjoyment, or public dissipations. Where is the friend to the good order, the sobriety, the moral habits of the community, not to say, to the spiritual and eternal interests of his fellow-men, who would not tremble at such a result !

If the piety of Christians, and their sense of religious obligation, were marked *now* by the fervour and constancy of *primitive* times, we should not only behold the sanctuaries of the Most High, through the whole of the day consecrated to his service, filled with devout worshippers, but the interesting assemblage collected at the *commencement* of the service, ready, with humble and reverent hearts, to accompany the servant of the Most High, who leads their devotions in the confession of their sins, and receiving the authorized declaration of God's mercy to the penitent,* to "worship, and fall down, and to kneel before the Lord their Maker." Nor would the *roving eye*, the *smiling look*, or the *irreverent whisper*, ever violate that collected, that sober, that deeply reverential deportment, which should mark the worshippers in the temple which the Lord of hosts fills with his presence.

V. It was another of those "old paths," those "good ways" in which Christians walked—to consider *communion with the Church*, in the exercise of penitence and faith, through its ministry and ordinances, as the appointed mode of salvation.

For they perceived that Christ had made a visible society the depository of his mercy and grace, when he commissioned his Apostles to "baptize all nations," and thus to admit them into that spiritual community with which he was to be present in the powers exercised by their successors "always, even to the end of the world."† And inspired Apostles had declared, that for this visible society, this Church, the Lord had given himself‡—that of this "body, he is the Head and the Saviour"§—that to this "Church were added, such as should be saved,"|| and that

* It is a characteristic of our liturgy, and a most appropriate one, to *commence* public worship with the *confession* of sin ; after which, having received the declaration of absolution, we address God, as "our Father in heaven," and then beseech him to "open our lips that our mouths may show forth his *praise*." This admirable and most edifying purpose of the liturgy is defeated by the innovation which prevails in some congregations of commencing public worship by "singing to the praise and glory of God." How singular must it appear in the worshippers, *after* thus praising God, before they have confessed their sins to him, to beseech him to "open their mouths, that they may show forth his praise!" an act which they have just been discharging without any invocation of his gracious aid.

† Matt. xxviii. 19, 20

‡ Ephes. v. 25.

§ Col. i. 18.

|| Acts ii. 47

communion with this Church was to be maintained by "continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship," in holy faith, in the doctrine which the Apostles set forth, and in union with the ministry which they constituted, and "in breaking of bread, and in prayers,"* in the participation of the eucharistic offering of bread and wine, and in the public devotions of the faithful.

But, alas! these inspired opinions, instead of being revered as those "good old paths," in which primitive martyrs and saints walked, and found rest to their souls, even an eternal rest in that heavenly kingdom where their course terminated, are now shunned as those contracted ways, in which the free and liberal spirit of the present age, walking forth in paths of its own choosing, disdains to be confined. The notion of an invisible Church, of which all sincere professors of the Christian name are members, whether with or without an Apostolic ministry and ordinances, is made to supersede the primitive doctrine of a visible society as the fold of salvation; known by its possessing that ministry, and those ordinances, as well as that doctrine, which have been handed down "from the Apostles' time."

And hence no regard is paid to another principle, which distinguished the primitive days of the Church—

VI. The necessity of a *valid commission* to the exercise of the *ministry*.

For if Jesus Christ be "the Head of the Church,"† and of course the only source of power in it, there can be no authorized ministry which does not derive its powers from him. "He glorified not himself to be an High Priest,"‡ did not exercise the high functions of his divine priesthood, until he received a visible commission from his eternal Father. An inspired Apostle declares, that "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,"§ is visibly commissioned by those who have authority for the purpose. It results that, except miraculous powers attest the pretension, no claim to the ministry can be valid, which is not supported by an external commission from the Apostles, whom our Lord constituted as the governors of his Church. And this commission can be conveyed through those only who, in regular succession, have perpetuated to the present day, the Apostolic power of commissioning to the ministry. It is not my object to inquire as to the persons who possess this valid commission for the exercise of the

* Acts ii. 42.

† Col. i. 18.

‡ Heb. v. 5.

§ Heb. v. 4

priesthood.* And yet, if, without an external commission, derived from Christ and his Apostles, there can be no authority to minister in sacred things, the inquiry is surely an important one. But how little, I need not say, is this inquiry regarded? "How can he preach except he be sent?"† is an Apostolic question, which one would think is the first, that, in every case of a claim to the ministry, would be asked. And this would lead to another—has *he* that commission which is the indispensable evidence of his being sent? But now, alas! the only inquiry is—Is he a good preacher? that is, is he captivating in his language, his manner, his gesture? This question supersedes all solicitude as to the soundness of his doctrine, or the validity of his commission; and, if answered in the affirmative, the "good preacher" will become the object of general attention; and crowds will contend for the envied privilege of catching the sound of his voice, or a glimpse of his animated elocution.

VII. Little regard is now paid to a principle which distinguished the Apostolic and primitive days of the Church; the heinousness of the *sin of schism*.

If in those days, even that lower species of this sin, which consisted in forming parties in the Church, under a ministry acting with apostolic authority, was pronounced a "carnal" sin,‡ how much more deserving of this censure must be that higher species of this offence, which consists in the exercise of the ministerial office without being invested with Apostolic authority for the purpose; and in attending on the official acts of those who exercise it? From "schism," as well as from all "heresy and false doctrine," we pray in the litany to be delivered. Surely then it is of importance that we inquire in what this sin consists:

* What says the Church of England, and the Protestant Episcopal Church on this point? "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church,—Bishops, Priests and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest or Deacon in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had episcopal consecration or ordination." *Preface to the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*. And in this form, in these offices, the Bishops having the exclusive power of ordination, are spoken of as appointed by God, or by his Providence and Holy Spirit.

† Rom. x. 15.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

and for this purpose we should "seek for the old paths;" and we shall be satisfied, that while we continue in communion with those orders of the ministry which "have been from the Apostles' time," and through God's good providence have been preserved to the Church of which we are members, and devoutly and regularly attend on their ministrations, the guilt of the sin of schism will not rest upon our conscience, nor appear in judgment against us at the day of account.

VIII. And have we not also to lament the *little attention* which is paid to that *holy season* which the Church has wisely set apart, previously to the commemoration of her Saviour's death, in which she expects such an abstinence from even innocent social festivities, as is suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion; and which was observed in the primitive Church, with a rigour and solemnity which would appal the relaxed zeal of the present day? Have we not to lament that the *holy table* to which the primitive Christians pressed in crowds, that they might commemorate their Saviour's death, and receive the means and pledges of his grace and merits, is now surrounded by comparatively few of those who are invited to participate of its celestial blessings? But, on these particulars, your time, and I am apprehensive, your patience, will not permit me to enlarge.

My brethren—it is one of the solemn promises of the Christian pastor, when he receives the commission for the priesthood, not only "so to minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church hath received the same;" but also "to teach the people committed to his cure and charge, with all diligence to keep and observe the same."* In fidelity, then, to my ordination vows, and firmly persuaded that the institutions of the Church of which I am a minister, bearing the impress of divine and apostolic authority, will be the means and pledges of salvation to those who duly receive and observe them, and that they are the "old paths," the "good ways," in which primitive saints walked, and found rest to their souls; I have sought to admonish you against those deviations from them, which modern custom sanctions, and to which modern fashion so powerfully allures. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

* Ordination office.

THE CLAIMS
OF THE
HOLY WEEK:
A PLAIN
ADDRESS TO CHURCHMEN.

"Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

BRETHREN,

LENT is drawing to a close, and if we have kept it in the spirit of the Church, we are prepared for the solemnities of the week with which it ends. If we have really done, as in our earnest supplications on Ash Wednesday we professed to do—if we have turned to the Lord with "weeping, fasting, and praying," we shall hallow the return of the season, when that redemption was accomplished, which alone gives efficacy to our tears, our fasts, or our prayers. How, then, do we propose to spend the Passion week? If as in times past, many of us will do well, for this week has never gone by without edification in the Church. But we can all do better: and this year there are so many reasons why we *should* do better, there are so many considerations in the state of things around us, appealing to our consistency as the disciples of Christ, and our duty as the members of His Church, that in the frequency of our devotions, in the earnestness of our intercessions, in the vigor of our faith, and in the abundance of our good works, it ought to be a great week in Israel.

Let us recollect, for a moment, the claims which the Passion week has upon the devotion of Churchmen. I ought rather to say, of all who profess the faith of Christ crucified, for it seems strange that any who place their hopes of salvation on the cross,

should fail to observe this anniversary of the week of Redemption.

It is, then, no common week. If there be any thing in antiquity and universal custom, if there be any reason in attaching a relative sanctity to times and seasons, (and when has reason not dictated it?) if there be any thing in the principles of association which lead men to commemorations of great events, any thing in the example of the wise and good, then the return of the week of the Redeemer's sufferings, is not a common week. It is a Holy Week. Why should we hesitate to think it so, when we may regard it as consecrated in the first instance by God himself? Our passion week had its origin in the Paschal week of the old dispensation. In the one, the Jew looked forward to the atonement, symbolized in his Passover lamb, to be revealed in the fullness of time; in the other, the Christian looks back upon the stupendous mystery as finished—the real subject of the week, with both Jew and Christian, being the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Thus, for nearly fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, there was a Holy Week in the Church of God. Year after year, the Jewish nation gathered around the temple to be nearer the great altar of their faith—they rehearsed the psalms of their redemption from Egypt—the paschal lamb was slain—the mystical supper was eaten—the days of unleavened bread were hallowed, and Israel returned to their dwellings sanctified anew. So it was from century to century. At length the Great Week arrived. The types and symbols disappeared in the awful event they had prefigured. The true PASCHAL LAMB was slain. The whole body of the Church was sanctified by that offering once made for all. And then did the week *cease* to be holy? Then did that period, the most momentous in all the lapse of ages, when mysteries were enacted on earth, at which all Heaven was looking down in amazement, cease to be had in remembrance by the Church? If, for fifteen hundred years, it had been dear to the faithful as the shadow

of good things to come, a week of pious expectation, was it no longer dear to them as a week commemorative of the great fulfilment? We cannot believe it. It is not in the nature of things. The first Christians, as the week came round, could not fail to observe it. Bringing with it so many recollections of the most affecting nature, it would command their religious veneration. History tells us that such was the case. St. Paul seems to refer to it, at least to the festival of Easter, with which it concludes, when he says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." The earliest ecclesiastical historians speak of the Paschal Week among Christians, and in the third and fourth centuries, we find it among the established institutions of the Church.* It was called the Paschal Week—the Great Week—the Holy Week. From that day until now we know the observance has prevailed in all the countries of Christendom. If, then, there is any thing in religious antiquity to attach sacredness to a season, surely the week of the Passion has become sacred. Considered as a continuation of the Passover week—for what else was its commencement?—it is a religious institution three thousand four hundred years old, and the most ancient extant next to the Sabbath.

Is there any thing in universal practice to enhance the claims of an institution upon our regard? Here we have the practice of the "Holy Church throughout all the world." Besides the Greek and Roman Churches, there are all the Protestants of Europe who are unanimous in the observance. The Lutherans and Calvinists, the Reformed Churches of Holland, the United Brethren, indeed, all on the continent, without exception, retain the week in their calendar as religiously as the Roman Catholics.†

* During the first three centuries, the paschal week of the Christians was kept at the same time with that of the Jews. By the canon of the Council of Nice, universally followed in Christendom, they do not now always fall together, but coincide sufficiently to make our passion week an anniversary of the original week.

† The Lutherans in particular celebrate the week, or the latter part of it, with great solemnities. In Germany, their churches are hung

The only exceptions are the Presbyterians of Scotland, some of the dissenters in England, and the Calvinistic denominations in our own country. To disregard the Holy Week, then, is to be singular in Christendom. It is to be peculiar, not Catholic. It is to violate ancient and universal associations. It is to throw aside an aid to piety which has been cherished by the wisest and holiest of the human race.

The last consideration is, indeed, the great reason for the ordinance. It is an aid to piety, and so, Brethren, let us use it. The Church has consecrated the week, let us consecrate it in our hearts. Let no one say, it is a formal observance, a mere outward ceremony; if it be so to any one, it is because he makes it so. If there *can* be a spiritual observance, it is one which calls us off from the world, and gathers us around the cross of Jesus Christ. There let our thoughts now be gathered. Now let there be a truce to the distractions of the world. Now let us know what it is to live chiefly in the bosom of our families, with the poor and the afflicted, in the closet, and in the house of God. We read. We pray. We follow the Redeemer in the mazes of his sufferings. We commune with our hearts, and are still. We instruct our families—we speak to them of the treachery of Judas, of the denial of Peter, of the weakness of Pilate—of the SAVIOUR, anointed by Mary, appointing the Eucharist—praying in the garden—standing mute before Pilate; and so, day after day, of the wondrous incidents in the deep tragedy of the week. But ah! you say, we are not ministers—we are men of business—we have not leisure for this. Not leisure generally—but, surely, leisure for holy things in the Holy Week. O, say not that in the course of the whole year, the theme of religion cannot be prominent for a few days in succession. Give not up yourselves so entirely to the pursuits of life. Be glad that a week comes in to check your worldly ardor. While the Church is showing you the Man of sorrows, in the

in black—as was formerly the case in this country. In some places, the whole congregation would appear dressed in black on Good Friday.

midst of his grief, must you needs have your wonted occupation or entertainment? While she bids you listen to him pouring out his soul in prayer, in that lengthened intercession which preceded his suffering have you no time to listen—as if, indeed, your portion were in that world for which he *then* prayed not? While she calls you to see him drink the bitter cup of his agony, must you quaff your cup of joy? While you see him sold for thirty pieces of silver, have you not a moment's fear, lest in the pursuit of gain, you also should betray Him? And on the very day of the crucifixion, because the multitude are above the superstition of paying it any respect, must you, too, be buying and selling and getting gain? Must the counting-room find you at the desk, or the store be kept open, lest your neighbours, whose consciences are not bound by the Church, should have a day's advantage over you in trade? What is that religion worth which never makes a sacrifice of temporal profits?—which leaves a man free for every chance of gain that is open to the world?

But you can be good enough to attend religious services extraordinary, provided they are held at night: and certainly that is better than not attending such services at all—but why not the services of the morning? * Why should our Church congregations during this week, be made up almost wholly of females? If mothers can leave their families, fathers can leave their merchandize. Do not begrudge Religion a few week-day hours. Do not reckon them lost because they are spent at church. Do not wait until every thing else is done, and you are tired out with the secular duties of the day, before you are ready to worship God, for then you will not be satisfied with the calm services of the Church; you will be too care-worn to be interested by prayers and Holy Scriptures which you have so often heard, and you must have something new and exciting to keep you

* Of course, it is not meant to object to Divine service at night while so many from their condition in life, can attend church at no other time.

awake. On the other hand, if you can steal away from your business for an hour while your spirits are fresh, and compose yourself to unite in the daily service and listen to those affecting narratives of the Passion, which the Church day after day rehearses to us, you will derive a benefit you did not expect; you will find it very wholesome to retire a while from the bustle of life; you will learn meditation; you will be disciplined to pray tranquilly as well as fervently; you will understand what it is to contemplate Jesus Christ, simply as he is held forth in the pages of the Gospel, full of grace and truth.

Thus let us hallow the Holy Week. Why should it not be the holiest week yet in our lives? When shall we bear the cross of Christ in earnest, if not when we see him toiling with it up Mount Calvary? When shall we renounce the world, if not when we see it crucifying the Lord of Glory? When shall we press forward with fresh zeal towards the mark of the prize of our high calling? When shall there be a renewal of our faith, if not when contemplating the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the precious death and burial, which were the price of our salvation?

Candidates for holy orders, let this be a holy week to you. If used aright, it may be a great means of grace. Now be the Cross your books of theology. Now look at the Master you are preparing to serve—and while you see Him in the depths of his humiliation—while you see Him washing his disciples' feet—while you see Him reviled but not reviling again—struck upon the face and only answering, "why smitest thou me?"—*then, then* determine whether you are in earnest in desiring to enter upon His service. With a *crucified* Master before your eyes, ask yourselves what you really mean, when you say you will follow Him. The Passion week shows the ministry of Jesus Christ in a light that we are afraid to see it in, but a light, my young brethren, in which it is good for you to look at it, that you may correct the false coloring reflected on it from the world. It is

a very pleasant thing to be a minister in the comfortable parish that you have pictured to yourself, and which *may* be the scene of your labors. But set not your heart upon it—learn to recognize your Lord, with his countenance of grief and his crown of thorns. He may love you so well—he may intend you for so high a seat in his kingdom—that you may have to drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. Go, then, watch and pray. At Calvary, learn whether God has called you to his service. At the foot of the cross kneel down; wait there in silence for the anointing from above, which must fit you for your work.

And we, brethren, (if the plainness of this address may be continued, it may already have passed the bounds of modesty,) we who minister in holy things, may prove the virtue of religious retirement. Our duties keep us much abroad. We receive and return the hospitalities of our flocks, and we mingle more in promiscuous company than we desire, that men may not think us gloomy and severe. But this week society will yield its claims, and we may make our time our own. When we rehearse the history of the passion, it may be after pondering it ourselves. We may go to our churches from our closets. Our meditations may be in Gethsemane as well as our sermons. We may supplicate at the altar after litanies at home. Now when our ministrations seem to clothe us with robes of deeper sanctity, the world may recognize in us the ministers of Jesus Christ: devout and self-denying men, really indifferent to the pomps and vanities which we professionally renounce, “watching unto prayer—our loins girt, and our lamps burning, and ourselves like servants waiting for their Lord.”

We are apt to talk of our likeness to the primitive Church. In the approaching week, then, let us endeavor, with God's grace, to give it something of a practical reality. If we enter into the true spirit of the observance, our relation to the world will, in some slight degree, resemble that of the early disciples; for the world knows not a holy week. Its business and

amusements, its plans and speculations, keep on their wonted course, and it would as soon think of suspending or moderating them, for the sake of contemplating the passion, as the heathen world of old would, of worshipping the crucified. And *we* must keep on *our* way, not in ostentation, but for protection. While they assemble in the mart, the courts, the exchange, we leave them (if only for a sacred hour or two) and take our silent way to the sanctuary. While they repair to the places of entertainment, we gather the church in our households, and “sing a hymn to Christ as to God.” While they live on the news of the day, we search the Scriptures and converse with the holy men of old. While they prolong their mirth through the night, we keep our vigils of prayer. While they banquet, we fast. While they spend for their pleasure, we give alms. While they court the rich, the fashionable, and the gay, we seek the abodes of the wretched, and the poor, we commune with Him who was despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Whatever be the dazzling scenes of life, still vivid before our eyes, and enshrined in the holy place of our hearts, be JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

O, could there be a Holy Week like this throughout our borders, the Church would be primitive indeed. There would be the revival of a spirit not to die with the week, but to live afresh in the feast of the resurrection, and abide in the body of the Church, well nigh glorified. Then Apostolic orders, ancient liturgies, and Catholic creeds, would have their living power. “Then should the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old—as in former years.” Then would there be that manifestation of the Church, as the MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST, which devout souls are praying for, and which they think is beginning to appear. Be it so. Let us “exhort one another, brethren, and so much the more, as we see THE DAY approaching.”



Nurseries for Heaven.

IN the north of Ireland stands an old family mansion, the proprietor of which is well known for his generous deeds. Early one summer morning, in the year 1836, I passed that way, and called, and was received with true Irish hospitality. After breakfast, my host said, "Now, Mr. —, I will give you some work : follow me." I arose and followed, and soon found myself in a large room, in which were gardeners, masons, carpenters, painters, &c., to the number of about 120 ; who were all employed in enlarging the house and improving the gardens. They had been collected at the sound of the bell for morning prayers. I read and prayed, and gave them a word of counsel and encouragement. The whole time of service was one quarter of an hour. Of course, the men were in their working dress, and a most interesting sight it was ; for I saw many of them using their shirt sleeves, instead of pocket handkerchiefs, to wipe away their tears.

After we retired, I asked my friend if that was his practice every day : "Yes," said he, "every day ; and every thing goes on the better for it. We have been engaged in these buildings upwards of a year, and we have never missed one morning. Either myself, or our curate, or some other minister, has officiated." "And what are the advantages connected with it ?" I inquired. "O," said he, "there are many, but the following are very evident. In the first place, some of the men have become religious. Two of the poor fellows lately died, who gave us every satisfaction we could wish that they were prepared for heaven. We often visited them in their affliction, and heard them bless God that they ever came to work at 'the hall ;' for their minds were first impressed at the morning service." I said, "This is a rich reward for the time thus spent." "Yes," he replied, "it is a rich reward ; but even apart from this, I am no loser, nor will any man be who is seeking to improve the temporal and spiritual condition of his people, for it promotes sobriety, by which they save more for their families ; it makes them more careful of their time ; and, besides, they always seem happy, for they consider me as their friend as well as their employer."

I expressed my hope that he would keep building at the same rate for seven years to come ; for by it his house became a large "nursery for heaven."

The following summer I visited the south of England, and took up my abode for a night in the house of a pious manufacturer. A little before ten the next morning, he said to me, "Would you like to see 'the works?'" "Yes." So we walked down, and as soon as we entered, a signal was given, and men, women, and children hastened into "the long room." Some sat, others stood, and when they were all assembled, a Bible was presented to me, with a request that I would perform Divine service, to which I consented. The strange and unexpected scene for a moment overcame me, and I was much affected. In conversing about it afterwards with the proprietor, I said, "You took me quite by surprise, sir." "Yes," said he, "I intended to do so. It is not usual for such services to be held in factories, and I was almost driven to it from necessity." "Indeed," said I, "how could that be?" "I will tell you. I had some very clever workmen who were much addicted to drunkenness, and other vices which usually accompany drunkenness. They were a great curse to the factory, as they were not only destroying themselves, but poisoning others. It grieved me a good deal, and I adopted various plans to reform them; but all in vain. It is true I could have discharged them; but I did not like to do that, on account of their families. At last I thought, I will try another plan: so I determined on that you have seen this morning, and God has blessed it. The men are reformed, and I have peace, and if my experience goes for anything, I would recommend the plan to every manufacturer in the world."

Now I wish to see what this gentleman has tried, and found to be so beneficial, universally adopted; and were this done, I have no doubt but it would quickly convert many a manufactory into a "nursery for heaven."

It has been hinted to me, that in some quarters an unhappy feeling exists between the masters and the men, in which case the plan would not be cordially received, if the masters proposed it; but it need not be abandoned on that account, as the following fact may show.

At Maidenhead, in Berkshire, I preached two sermons in behalf of the instruction of the liberated negroes in the West Indies. This was on the Lord's Day. The next morning at six I preached again, when a labouring man, dressed in a waggoner's frock, came to me and said, "I should like to speak to you alone, sir." "Well, friend, what do you wish?" "I wonder if I understood you yesterday: did you say that missionaries were wanted to instruct the blacks?" "Yes." "Then it is true?" "Yes." "Well, sir, I have been thinking a good deal about it to-night. The Lord Jesus Christ has been a blessed Master to me, and he has great claims upon me. He has made me happy, sir. He has pardoned my sins—he has saved my soul." "I rejoice," said I, "to hear you say so. then Christ has claims upon you, indeed. I hope you love him." "Love him!" he exclaimed, "Love him, sir! Yes; and I could tell the poor heathen much about him." I said, "Can you read?"

"No, sir," he replied, "I cannot read. There was no school in my native village, when I was young; now there are schools every where, and every poor child may learn to read. It was not so when I was a boy; but though I cannot read, yet I could tell them a good deal about him." "What is your occupation, friend? Do you work in the fields?" "Yes, sir, I was working in the fields this morning, but I could not stop any longer: I thought I would come and hear a bit more about it." "And I am glad you came," said I, "that I might hear this precious testimony from your lips. And now I will tell you how to turn it to good account. You are too old to go as a missionary, even if you were qualified; but you may be useful at home. When you have some people working with you in the fields, tell them what you have told me; say to them, 'The Lord Jesus Christ has been a blessed Master to me. He has made me happy: he has pardoned my sins: he has saved my soul:' and say, he is able to do the same for them, and he is willing too; and urge them without delay to seek his mercy, then you will be 'a field missionary.'" At this the springs in his head broke loose, and a flood of tears gushed from his eyes, and he caught hold of my right hand with both of his, and said, "Thank you, sir, thank you; I will. Ay; I'll go, and be 'a field missionary:'" and he went.

Now, how many pious men are there among the mechanics and labourers of our land, who can read and write, and speak also, who could do among their companions what this good man was going to do in the fields, that is, become "every day missionaries." O, think about it. Pray over it. Resolve on it, and practise it. Then God would open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing.

When the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, every man did a little towards it. He who had a house, repaired before his own house; and he who had only a chamber, built before his window. Many hands soon accomplish a great work; and if every one who loves God would act a faithful part towards his neighbour, we should soon see great good done.

Respected countrymen! You wish to be happy; yet fifty acts of Congress would not produce the happiness you want: no; but more religion would do it: more in the rich, and more in the poor; more in the employers, and more in their hands. For if there were more religion, there would be more love: and if there were more love, there would be a mutual fulfilling of that holy commandment, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do ye to them, for this is the law and the prophets."

Oh may the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners, constrain our hearts to love him, and to love one another! Then whatever our situation in life, we shall try to guide others to heaven.

How LITTLE is the "first and great commandment" really thought of! I mean the true and proper love of God, leavening the heart, as the great ruling principle of life and the foundation for discharge of *every* duty, whether toward God or man! How little do people often seem to think or care about the things which are *peculiarly* God's!—The days of rest which bear His name, given us for holy and for spiritual ends, and not entirely for our own pleasure; His worship; His house; His sacraments! How much less still do they consider (as would seem) about the usage of a *restored nature*, presented to us as a constant pattern in the person of God's own Son; or, in a word, of any of the more peculiar motives, and advantages, and obligations, of *the Gospel*!

How many are the instances, in which the man of worldly diligence is really respectable, and worthy of the praises of his brethren as a member of society; but where the fire from *heaven* (if it may be permitted so to speak) appears not yet to have descended upon the altar of *the heart*. It is the want of *spiritual conviction*—of "salt within themselves"—in *such* persons, that forms one of the most ruinous defects and blemishes in Christian communities; a sight, than which few give more lively pain to the reflecting and sincere believer, or more advantage to the adversaries or corrupters of the truth, as it is found in Jesus Christ. And let me add, it is an evil which we all have need to remedy (so far as any share or remnant of it lurks within us) as we would wish and strive to do the best we may for the advancement of God's kingdom upon earth, and the fulfilment of our constant prayer that it "may come." For, if the Gospel be our highest and our chiefest good—our only solid rock of hope and comfort;—if truth be *there, and there alone*—ought these things so to be, among a brotherhood professing to believe the Gospel; who have been made partakers of its precious promises? Or ought we not to be, according to our several stations, at once industrious *and* religious; diligent and pious; "not slothful in business," but yet "fervent in spirit;" *serving the LORD* alike in every way; "glorifying God both with our bodies and with our spirits, which are His?"—*T. Miller.*

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ON

DELAY OF REPENTANCE.

A

S E R M O N .

BY THE LATE
THOMAS WILSON, D.D.

BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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ON DELAY OF REPENTANCE.

JOHN IX. 4.

*The night cometh when no man can work.**

IF this gracious intimation of our Lord were well considered, it would prevent *two very great evils*. It would awaken Christians who are too apt to live without thought, and without concern, as if they had no *work*, no *business*, upon their hands; and it would hinder those, who know that they *have* something to do, from putting it off till it is too late to finish it.

Our Saviour's words in the text suppose that every man has a *work of importance* upon his hands; and they serve to warn us of the danger of leaving our work undone, till it is impossible to finish it. "The night cometh when no man can work;" that is, death is near at hand, as sure as the night follows the day; and, therefore, "whatever our hand findeth to do, we ought to do it with all our might;" the consequence of a surprise being most dreadful.

To prevent this, let us consider, *in the first place*, that we have all a work of importance upon our hands.

2dly. That we are hastening on towards death, as the day does towards night; and as THAT approaches, we have still less time to finish our work. And,

3dly. That our eternal happiness or misery depends upon our doing the work in the day appointed us to do it in.

I. Let us consider seriously, *that every Christian has a work of importance upon his hands*.

It is for this reason the Apostle exhorts Christians "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling;" that is, with a concern suitable to the *work* they have to do; of which *work* take THIS SHORT ACCOUNT.

We are all sinners, and must all make our peace with God, as we hope for mercy. We have renounced the world, and yet we are apt to love it too well, so that we must labour hard to wean our affections from it. We are perpetually in danger of offending

* See John ii 55. Jer. xiii. 16. Eccles. ix. 10.

God, and we must be upon our watch continually, or we shall certainly do so. We have all, more or less, contracted evil habits, and it will take *time*, and *care*, and *pains*, to get rid of them. We stand in need of the grace of God every moment of our lives, and are every day of our lives obliged to pray for the aids of his Spirit to help our infirmities. We receive favours continually and are continually bound to thank God for them.

Here is work enough for any Christian; and he that fancies he has nothing to do, or thinks Christianity to be a state of ease or idleness, does not yet know what it is to be a Christian. But even *this* is not all.

We have all of us very many enemies to struggle with. The *devil*, a very powerful spirit, "walketh about continually seeking whom he may devour," finding them careless and unprepared to resist him.—The *world*, a very corrupt world, is always tempting us to follow its ways, which lead to destruction. And lastly, *our own hearts*, if we had no other adversary, would ruin us, without a constant watchfulness. So that a man needs not be at pains to be undone: we shall be undone, of course, if we do not labour, and strive, and make resistance.

But then, besides these general duties, which belong to all Christians, every Christian has his proper work, for the faithful discharge of which he must one day answer.

Parents, for instance, stand charged with the care of their children, to provide for them, and to bring them up in the fear of God.

Masters are accountable for their servants' welfare, and that they live as become Christians. *Servants* are bound to be obedient and faithful, and it will require care and pains to be so.

Magistrates stand obliged, and must be at pains, to govern and to do justice: and *subjects* must be careful to obey for conscience' sake.

The *rich* will find enough to do to watch against pride, covetousness, and many other hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

And the *poor*, as they have their proper duties, so they have their peculiar difficulties to struggle with,—to be content with their condition, without attempting to better it by unjust ways.

In a word; all Christians are accountable for their *time*, for the *talents* they have received, and for the *duties* of that state of life in which the providence of God has placed them. And such as live as if they had nothing to do, will one day wish that they had never been born.

But of all employments, that of a *pastor* is the most *difficult*, the most *hazardous*, and the most *laborious*, to discharge it faithfully. To conduct Christians to eternal happiness, through a corrupt world, infinite errors, and most powerful enemies, to teach the way of salvation, without prostituting the word of God to vile purposes;—to convert sinners to God by their example as

well as by their sermons;—to instruct the ignorant —to **reprove** the disorderly;—to awaken the consciences of the careless;—to silence gainsayers;—to comfort and restore dejected penitents;—to visit the sick, and to answer all the ends of that great work;—to *pray* constantly for a blessing upon our labours, and upon our people, without which all our labours would be in vain,—These are but *part* of that great work with which pastors stand charged.

And when we seriously advise Christians to remember the work they have to do, and the account they must give, we acknowledge, at the same time, that we ourselves stand charged with a greater burden than *they* do, and that it behoves *us*, above all Christians, to remember, “that the night cometh when no man can work,” since we have so great a work to answer for.

And now you see, good Christians, that we have all of us a *work of importance* upon our hands; a *work* which must, at our peril, be done while the day lasts. To make us all, therefore, more concerned to do the work in its season which God has appointed us, we ought,

II. In the second place, to consider, *that we are all hastening on towards death, as the day does towards night; and that as THAT approaches, we have still less time to finish the work we have to do.*

The truth is, the sentence of death is already passed upon every one of us; and God only knows when that sentence is to be put in execution: till then, *he* has allowed us time to prepare for an *everlasting state* that must follow; a state of *endless misery*, if we shall have spent our time ill; and a state of *unspeakable happiness*, if we shall have done the work in the season which God hath appointed us.

We should do well, therefore, to consider, that the time of our life, which is already past, and was not employed in doing our duty, is forever lost to us; which must needs be an astonishing thought to all such as have spent the greatest part of their life in sin and vanity, without considering why God sent them into the world, or what will be expected from them when they come to account for the time they have lived.

He that has spent his youth in folly and doing nothing, has no more youth to spend in virtue; and he that has never thought of the concerns of his soul, till a few days before he comes to die, has but a few days in which to provide for eternity. Now *this* is a consideration which should make Christians very serious indeed.

If a man in his worldly affairs has made an ill bargain, *time*, and *advice*, and *future care*, may set all straight again, and the loss may be made up. If a man has spent a good estate, he has this comfort, however, that he shall not always live to be reprov'd for his bad husbandry.

But what amends can be made, what arguments can be made use of, to comfort a person who has lived an unthoughtful use-

less, sinful life, and is just going to give an account of his talents, and the use he has made of them?

Christians would do well to lay these things to heart, and not to trust the endless welfare of their souls to such uncertainties as are the number of our days, which God only knows, and who may be provoked to shorten them, when men make so ill use of them.

In short; we are no sooner out of the hands of our Maker, but we are upon our way to the grave; we do, as St. Paul speaks, "die daily." Some part of our *time*, some of our *friends*, some of our *comforts*, are every day going, till at last we follow them ourselves. I must not say, *and then there's an end of us*; so far from that, that *then* begins our *happiness* or *misery*;—for,

III. *Our eternal happiness or misery will depend upon our having spent this life well or ill*; this being the sentence of life and death: "they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire."

A *consideration* so serious and affecting, to such as lay any thing to heart, that one should need say no more on this head, if the corrupt heart of man, as we find by sad experience, did not render this very consideration of little use, by inventing ways to delude themselves, without Scripture, and without reason.

I shall not now insist upon the delusion of those who take no care how they spend their time, depending upon the prayers of those they leave behind them, as if God had given them any warrant in his word to do so; or, as if those they leave behind them, would be more concerned for their souls, than they themselves were when they were alive. Neither shall I do any more than take notice of the delusion of such as depend upon the *goodness* of God, without considering that God is *just* as well as *good*; and having expressly declared, that "he will judge men according to the works done in the body, whether they have been good or evil;" he will most certainly do so, though foolish men should fancy that he will not be severe with them, notwithstanding their provocations. He has showed the world that he can be severe, when sinners go on to provoke him, by destroying not only particular persons, but families, cities, countries, and the whole world, for their wickedness.

But that which I would more particularly insist upon is, *the delusion of depending upon a DEATH-BED REPENTANCE*; when men defer that, which should be the work of their whole life, to the very last moments of it, *to the evening, when no man can work*. A delusion so common, that one cannot be too earnest with Christians to beware of it, lest it happen to them as it did unto Esau,* "who found no place for repentance, though he sought it *carefully with tears*"

* Heb. xli. 17.

Christians, therefore, should be very often put in mind, that the terms of salvation are already fixed, which are, "that without holiness no man shall see the Lord." That when men "repent, they should turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." A very dreadful consideration to such as have put off their amendment, till it is too late to be done!

To which if we add such considerations as *these*:—that the condition of such as defer their repentance grows every day more and more desperate. That the judgment of the unfruitful tree, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" may be passed upon a sinner when he least thinks of it. That the merciful invitation, "seek ye the Lord while he may be found,"* supposes that there is a time when he will not be found of them that seek him; that "he, who being often reprov'd, yet hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." That the state of sinners may be so provoking, that though *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job* should intercede for them, yet God will not hearken to their prayers.

Whoever considers these things, and that God has made our time short and our death uncertain, on purpose that we may begin betimes to consider of our latter end, and be always prepared for our Lord's coming; that death is ever at hand, and the consequence of a surprise most dreadful. A Christian cannot think of these things with any degree of seriousness, but he must see a necessity either of being prepared for death whenever God shall call him, or of being undone forever—which cannot be thought on without astonishment.

Well, then, what a wise man when he comes to die would wish that he had done, *that* he ought to do *forthwith*: "since in the midst of life we are in death;" since the day wears away apace, and since eternity depends upon our making use of our time.

I will, therefore, tell you, what every man in his senses will wish he had done when the night comes; that is, when he comes to die; he will wish, for instance,

First; that he had made a just and Christian settlement of his temporal concerns, that he might not be distracted with the cares of this world, when all his thoughts and hopes should be upon another.

2dly. That he had made his peace with God by a timely repentance.—*3dly*. That he had faithfully done his duty in the state of life in which the providence of God had placed him.—*4thly*. That he had, in some good measure, weaned his affections from things temporal, and had loosened the ties which fasten us to the world.—*5thly*. He will wish, moreover, that by acts of mercy and charity he had entitled himself to the mercy of God, which, at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, he will

stand in need of.—*6thly*. That he had got such habits of patience and resignation during his health, as might render death less frightful.—*7thly* and *lastly*. He will wish that by a constant practice of devotion, preparatory for death, he had learned what to pray for, what to hope for, and what to depend upon, in his last sickness.—This is what every man will wish that he had done, when he comes to die; that *when the night cometh*, he may have *no more work to do*, than to resign his soul into the hands of God, in hopes of a blessed resurrection.

I will just show you the *reasonableness*, and the *necessity*, of having all *these works* done before the night comes, when no man can do them as he *ought to do*.

And first, for what concerns the *settlement of a man's temporal affairs*. If we consider the duties of one who is going to make his *last will*; that he is to take care for the *payment of all his just debts*; that he is to make *restitution*, if he has wronged any body; that his charities ought to be useful, and as large in proportion as the favours he has received; that he is to do no *wrong*, show no *resentment*, leave *nothing undone*, which may as much as possible prevent *misunderstandings, quarrels, and lawsuits*, amongst executors.

Whoever, I say, would faithfully discharge all these engagements, must not fancy that these things are to be done in a hurry, when the *night is come*, and a man wants time to consider, friends to advise, and power to collect his distracted thoughts.

And if so much time is necessary to settle a man's *temporal* concerns; how much more is necessary to settle his *spiritual*,—to *make his peace with God, by a sincere repentance*; which every man when he comes to die will wish with all his soul he had done while he was in health, and could redeem his misspent time, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance,—*which is the only sure sign of a true conversion*.

In short, a Christian's whole life ought to be a state of repentance. He ought to see and bewail the *corruption of his nature*, which makes him backward to please God, ready to offend him, fond of the pleasures of this life, and unthoughtful of that which is to come. He ought to call himself to an account daily, and see whether he gets the mastery of his corruptions, and whether he does not often fall into the sins he has repented of. He ought to have some good assurance that he grows in grace, and that he is in some good measures restored to the image of God, in which he was at first created.

This, I say again, ought to be the work of a man's whole life; and he that leaves it to the last moments of his life, must not expect the comforts of a happy death.

All Christians are most highly concerned to lay these things to heart. They should imitate the wise builder who sat down and counted the cost, whether he was able, and whether he was resolved to go through the work. So should every man seriously

consider what it is he undertakes, when he promises to be Christian; namely, that he will no longer be the devil's subject and servant;—that he will no longer follow his own corrupt inclinations, but be governed by the law of God, and do that which he believes will best please him;—that he will receive the Gospel as the law of God, without doubting its truths, or disputing the reasonableness of its injunctions;—that he will obey the laws of God, as the only way of pleasing God, and of qualifying himself for heaven and happiness.

Besides this, he is to consider the difficulties he is certain to struggle with; namely, a corrupt world, a corrupt heart, infinite errors, and powerful enemies, which yet he is not to submit to; forasmuch as the Almighty God has promised to defend and assist him.

In short, if Christians could be prevailed on to consider sometimes, that this life is but a short passage to another, which is to last forever;—that it is a state of trial;—that our eternal happiness or misery depends upon our good or bad behaviour while we live here;—that God requires obedience to his laws, *only* that we may not be miserable;—that he requires nothing of us but what he will enable us to go through, even with pleasure, if we submit ourselves entirely to be governed by his Spirit and by his laws. If Christians would consider this, and that *the night of death cometh, when no man can work*; it is probable, they would think of what they have to do with a little more seriousness than is to be met with, and *consider things as they have regard to eternity*, without which we shall, *before we perceive it*, set our hearts upon the world, forget the only business for which we were sent into it; and when we come to die, have no sign of virtue to show; but, when it is too late, repent that we have been *unprofitable servants*.

To conclude, the sentence passed upon Adam, and in him upon all his posterity, after his fall, was *this*: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Labour, therefore, is a duty, from which no man is exempt, without forfeiting his right to his daily bread; we are obliged to it *by this sentence*, as we are the children of Adam. As we are Christians, we are obliged to it, in conformity to Jesus Christ, whose whole life was all labour and sufferings. And lastly, as sinners, we are bound to it, because, without labour and pains, we can never be reconciled to God.

It behoves us all, therefore, to take care that this great business of our life be not put off till it is too late to finish it, lest death overtake us unawares, and we be obliged to bewail our unthoughtfulness in a miserable eternity.

COMMON ERRORS.

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

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COMMON ERRORS.

IN a small town in Gloucestershire there lived, about thirty years ago, an industrious man, by name John Wilmot, who maintained his wife and only son by keeping a small shop, in which he sold needles, thread, pins, laces, and other such small articles.

This man was a quiet, inoffensive person, but unfortunate in his wife, who, though a tidy, hard-working woman, was very self-willed, and so full of pride on account of the cleanliness of her house, together with her saving management, by which she enabled her husband to put by a few pounds every year, that he had no little to suffer from her imperious temper.

Mrs. Wilmot was a tall, bony, hard-featured woman, and, inasmuch as she had passed her youth without falling into any of those grievous offences so frequent among the lower orders of females, whose sense of morality and decency, I am sorry to say, is for the most part exceedingly slight, she failed not to hold herself very high upon the notion of her extraordinary virtue, not unfrequently telling her husband, and especially whenever he offended her or complained of her temper, that she only wished he had taken some one of her neighbors to wife, since that might have taught him how to value a virtuous woman. And as Mrs. Wilmot prided herself on her morality, so she entertained a high opinion of her religion; since she was a constant church-goer, and brought the text home every Sunday the year round.

I have before intimated, that John had an only son, whose name was Joseph, a boy who had been of a weak constitution from his childhood, and who, in consequence of his inability to go out among other boys, had been always at home with his mother. Mrs. Wilmot had as little tenderness in her nature as any woman can be supposed to possess; nevertheless she had a great affection for her son, he being, as she often represented the matter, a part of her own flesh and blood: in consideration of which she indulged him to the utmost extreme which her circumstances would admit, waiting upon him hand and foot, and pleading his want of health for these extraordinary indulgences. She allowed him an easy chair, and the warmest seat in the chimney-corner; and by pampering his sickly appetite with every nicety within her reach, she confirmed that weakness of constitution which better management might, perhaps, have removed.

When a healthy lad is improperly indulged, he very soon makes his parents feel the ill effect of such treatment by breaking out into excesses. But this was not the case with Joseph Wilmot. His infirmities compelled him to stay at home, and his weakness obliged him to be quiet; so that as all his comforts depended on his mother, he naturally clung to this parent. And though he was sometimes fretful and impatient, yet, as I said before, that very weakness which made him fretful prevented him from breaking out into any excesses of riot or disobedience; insomuch that he was generally considered by his neighbors as a good son.

As Joseph Wilmot advanced in age without acquiring strength, he became fond of reading as one means of passing away the time without weariness. And as his mother, who was herself very ignorant, entertained a persuasion not uncommon among illiterate and unenlightened persons, that reading of any kind, no matter what, must be a kind of religious exercise, she became more than ever confirmed in the opinion of her son's merits, often making her boast of his good life and strict observance of every duty.

In the meantime the young man advanced in years, and being thus constantly restrained from open and glaring transgressions, he displayed that selfishness which is natural to the unrenewed man, in a spirit of censoriousness against those vices from which he was himself withheld by the peculiar circumstances of his case. This formality was however much admired by his partial mother, who verily believed, that the bitterness with which he spoke of the sins of his neighbors was a proof of his own purity of mind and hatred of vice.

In the meantime, his constitution became gradually weaker, till he was at length laid upon his bed with the severe attack of a disease to which he had long been subject, but which now appeared to threaten his speedy dissolution. It is one thing to look at death at a distance, and another to view it close at hand. The natural man shrinks from death with inconceivable anguish; but the servant of CHRIST, when this object of universal dread draws nigh, clings closer to his Saviour, with a humble assurance that he in whom he has long trusted will support him in this last conflict. But Joseph, buoyed up with the idea of his own good qualities, had never felt the necessity of a Saviour, and was therefore utterly destitute of such a helper as the dying man must ever feel the need of, unless indeed he be numbered among those of whom the Psalmist saith, *The wicked have no bands in their death*; to wit, those obdurate sinners who die as they have lived, without a single thought of God or of the future world.

Joseph, however, was by no means so hardened as the persons above described; so that when death, as I before said, looked him close in the face, he became very much dejected, and gave utterance to his terrors in a manner so distressing, that his mother, finding herself no longer able to soothe and console him

by her usual expressions of commendation, ran out into the street, and brought in with her a certain old woman, who was held in high esteem in the town as an attentive and skilful person about the sick, and one who was said to have a mighty comfortable way of talking to dying people. This old woman, whom we shall call the Widow Barclay, or Nurse Barclay, such being her usual appellation in the neighborhood, was engaged at a wedding when Mrs. Wilmot came to call her: hearing, however, that the occasion for which she was required was of a melancholy nature, she immediately cast her countenance into a serious mould, and following Mrs. Wilmot to her house, she failed not to utter several audible groans as she ascended the stairs to the sick man's room. Persons in the dejected situation in which Joseph Wilmot found himself at that period, are ready to catch at every shadow of comfort. Accordingly, the young man, at the sight of the old lady, raised his languid head, and holding out his hand, "O! Nurse Barclay, this is kind of you, indeed," he said. "I am very ill, very low, very much afraid of death. Tell me, what must I do? I fear things will go hard with me at last."

"Go hard with you! dear young man," said the widow, drawing up her head with a peculiar air, not seldom used on such occasions; "if it is to go hard with you, what is to become of thousands and tens of thousands of poor sinners?" And then turning to his mother, who stood by; "I say, Mrs. Wilmot, what is to become of thousands and tens of thousands, if it is to go hard with this good young man at the last day?"

"Very true," returned Mrs. Wilmot; "and I have said the very same to him a hundred and a hundred times. Why, the poor dear boy speaks of himself as if he had been a common housebreaker, or worse, when I his mother can vouch for him, that he has led the best of lives, and never injured man nor beast."

"O, mother, mother," said Joseph, with a deep sigh, "how can you talk so? are we not all sinners? does not the Prayer-book say so? and yet you will have it that I have no faults."

"Faults!" repeated the Widow Barclay: "no, no, Joseph, your mother does not pretend to say that you have no faults; that is not what you mean, is it, Mrs. Wilmot?"

"No, no," returned Mrs. Wilmot, "I did not mean exactly to say that Joseph has never done a wrong thing; that perhaps might be saying too much, because you know no human creature is altogether without fault: but this I can say, that there never was a better son than my poor lad there; and I would say it, if need be, in the face of all the world."

"There, now," said the widow, exultingly; "there, Joseph, hear what your mother says: if she does not know you, I cannot tell who does."

"I can," said Joseph; "I know one that knows me better than

my mother, and that is myself: whatever my mother may say, I know that I have many faults."

"Faults again," repeated the widow, interrupting him; "to be sure, child, you have had some faults: we grant you, that it is true enough, all are sinners; but God is too good to punish his poor creatures for a few faults: the Almighty is very merciful, and will be sure to forgive you."

"O," said Joseph, "but though my mother counts me religious, I know that I have not been so; I have lived until now without any knowledge or thought of God; and though I may have led a more moral life than some men, yet I feel that this neglect of my duty to my Maker is alone sufficient to condemn me."

"Pooh, pooh," said the widow, tossing up her chin, "who has put such thoughts in your head? I don't see but you are quite as good after all as some people who make a mighty stir and outcry about religion, filling one's ears with their hymns and prayers."

Joseph was silent, for indeed he felt himself overpowered by the volubility of the old lady's tongue: on which she, turning to his mother, said, "Poor dear lad, how he does but talk! I am certain sure he has had sufferings enough in this world to prevent his fearing any thing for the next; at any rate it cannot be said of him as was said of the rich man in the Testament, that he has had all his good things in this life."

"So I tell him, so I tell him," said Mrs. Wilmot, sighing, "and so I have told him over and over again: if I have said it once, I have said it twenty times; he has had troubles enough, poor soul, that he has troubles enough to make up for all his sin. If ever any body was afflicted in this world, I am sure it may be said so of him."

"There now," said the widow, turning to Joseph with an air of satisfaction, "do you hear what your mother says, my boy?"

"I do hear," replied the young man, sighing; "I do hear it; but how my sufferings can atone for my sins I cannot understand. All the sufferings I have endured I have deserved; ay, and I deserve a great deal more, that is, if the Lord should deal with me according to my sins, and reward me according to mine iniquities."

"There again," said Nurse Barclay, lifting up her eyes and her hands, "do you hear, Dame Wilmot, how the poor boy talks of his sins and his iniquities, poor innocent soul?"

"Innocent soul!" repeated the sick youth: "you will not talk of innocent souls, Mrs. Barclay, when you come to be in my situation; at least, I hope you will not. There are no souls innocent but those of the faithful, who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Who are those you are talking of?" asked the widow.

"Those," returned Joseph, "who have been brought to the

knowledge of CHRIST, and have received him into their hearts by faith."

"O, there you are again got upon your high doctrines," replied the widow: "such doctrines may be very well for those who have learning, but for such ignorant folks as we are, how can we be expected to understand them. Ay, Mrs. Wilmot, is it not so? It is no matter what we are, provided we are sincere; we are then safe enough."

"*Sincere!*" said Joseph, with a deep sigh. "but I have not been sincere."

"*Not sincere!*" repeated the mother; "why, Joseph. my boy, your trouble puts you beside yourself."

"No, mother, no!" replied the young man, "I am not beside myself, I perhaps never knew myself so well as I do now—I tell you the truth: I have hitherto lived in hardness of heart, in contempt of God, and in separation from CHRIST."

"Why, child," said the widow, half angry, "if God did not give you grace to be pious, how was you to help yourself? You did as well as you could, I am sure you could not do more."

"I did not do as well as I could," returned Joseph, with a degree of peevishness which he could no longer restrain: "do you presume to charge the Almighty with injustice? If I had not grace, did I use the means to obtain it? What does the Scripture say? *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* No, no; if I perish, it is all my own work: I have done ill, and I know it; and I fear that I shall eternally rue the consequences of my wicked life."

"Do not be so hot, so impatient, my lad," said the widow, sitting down and taking his hand, at the same time looking significantly at his mother. "Well, well, we will grant all you require: you have been a naughty lad, and now you are sorry for it, and this blessed repentance will put all right. What does the Bible say? *Repent, and you shall be forgiven.* Is it not so, Mrs. Wilmot? You cannot do better than repent: you must try to make yourself better, that is what you have to do: you must make yourself fit to be saved, and then, you know, for the sake of your repentance all will be forgiven you." So saying, she shook his hand, and promising to return next day, hastened down stairs to return to the party she had left, saying to John Wilmot, as she hurried through the shop, "I found your son very low, Mr. Wilmot: he would have it he was a grievous sinner, and when I would have proved the contrary, he got so hot that I was forced to let him have his way; and so I talked to him a little on the subject of repentance, all as if he had been one of the worst of sinners, poor dear innocent soul; where can he have got such gloomy notions of religion?"

John Wilmot, who was preparing fourpenny balls of worsted from a large skein which he had before him, ceased to twirl his reel, and lifting up his eyes with his usual dulness of comprehension, said to the sprightly widow who stood before him,

"Thank you, Mrs. Barclay, you are wonderfully kind to all sick folks; and so you think my poor lad needs repentance?"

"Repentance!" repeated the good woman; "you quite misunderstand me, John Wilmot; how could you think that I should say any such a thing? only sick folks, you know, must be humored: there never was a better lad on earth than poor Joseph; and there is not, I am sure, a more innocent lad in all our town."

"So my wife says," returned John, winding again, while the busy dame bustled out of the shop.

In the mean time poor Joseph begged to be left awhile alone, in order to give way to those confused and miserable feelings which the discourses of his mother and Mrs. Barclay had in no small degree tended to increase.

We may compare Mrs. Barclay, and other ignorant comforters of the same description, to those mistaken teachers spoken of in Ezekiel xiii. 10, 11: "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall."

Poor Joseph lay without comfort on his bed, after his mother had left him, till sunset, which did not happen long before nine o'clock, it being the height of summer. At this time she returned again to bring him his supper, saying, that she would have come before, only she fancied he might be asleep. He took his supper from her, and begged to be left again as soon as possible. "Why, child," said Mrs. Wilmot, "what is the matter with you to-night? I never saw you in such a way before; you are quite unsociable, and will take no comfort from any one. I brought the Widow Barclay to see you, and even she could not please you."

"No, mother," said Joseph, "it was not likely she should, talking after such a fashion as she did."

"Well, well, child," returned the mother, "let me settle your pillow, and put your bed-clothes comfortable, and then I will leave you; and I hope by morning you will be better satisfied." So saying, she departed.

Poor Joseph being left again, was filled with so many unpleasant thoughts, that it was impossible for him to sleep. The night was exceedingly sultry, and Mrs. Wilmot, by her son's request, had left the window open nearly at the foot of his bed, promising to come about midnight to shut it. As the young man lay propped up on his bed, his eyes were continually fixed on the prospect which presented itself through the open window. The room in which he lay had a western aspect; and that part of the sky, where the sun had disappeared, still retained a faint glow, all else seemed buried in obscurity. Right between this glowing part of the sky and Joseph's window, stood the parish church, the figure of which, as well as those of the yew trees in the

church-yard were distinctly marked by the faint light behind them, and together suggested no very pleasant thoughts to this poor young man, who was now lying on his bed of sickness, a stranger to redeeming love, and overwhelmed with the fear of death. Poor Joseph having lain for awhile looking on this scene, at length broke out in lamentations—"O! death! death!" he said: "he must have a stout heart indeed, who can look on death, and that which may follow death, without fear. In a few months, or perhaps in a few weeks, my poor body may be laid in that church-yard; and then, where shall my soul be found, laden as it is with sin? Can I hope to be forgiven? God is indeed merciful, but he is also just and holy; what then is to become of me?" The poor young man then began to weep and sob so audibly, that his father and mother, who were in the next room, came running to him; and his mother declared that she would leave him no more that night: so, laying herself down on the outside of his bed, she continued to repeat to him such words of comfort as her erroneous notions of religion suggested, till the sick man, being entirely worn out with fatigue, fell into a disturbed sleep. The first request which Joseph made to his mother in the morning was, that she would send for the minister of the parish.

"O, Joseph!" said the poor woman, in great alarm, on hearing this request, "you terrify me! surely you do not think of dying! Do you feel yourself worse? Shall I call the doctor?"

"No, no," returned Joseph, peevishly, "no, no, mother, call the minister; beg him to come: and if you have any love for me, do let me have my own way in this matter. Don't talk to me any more as you did last night, it makes me worse and worse. You will have it that I am not a sinner—that I am a good lad—that I may be sure of going to heaven for my good works; while my heart and my conscience tell me quite the contrary;—and this is a kind of contradiction which I cannot endure."

"Contradiction!" repeated the mother; "was ever any thing like that, to accuse me of contradicting you? Why, now I ask you if I have not been the most indulgent of mothers? and I take this very ungrateful of you, Joseph, to say that I contradict you." Thus saying, she burst into tears.

"O, mother," said Joseph, much touched by her tears, for he had never before seen her so affected, "do not cry; do not grieve about me; you have been a kind parent to me; I did not mean to distress you. But if you love me, do send for the minister."

Mrs. Wilmot, though very unwillingly, now submitted to her son's desire; and going out immediately, soon returned with the minister, who was one of those wise and faithful servants, who make it their only business on earth to do their heavenly Master's work. When this excellent man was introduced into Joseph's room, and had taken his seat by the young man's bed, he put several questions to him, in order to obtain some little acquaintance

with his character before he entered into any particular discourse with him.

"Sir," said Joseph, "I am full of concern about the state of my soul. I know that I must die soon, and I fear my actions will not stand examination at the last day; though my mother tells me, she is sure that if I am not saved, it will go hard with multitudes; and I hardly know myself what to think about it, since I certainly have led a more moral life than most young men; though that may be partly owing to the check which my infirmities have laid upon me."

"My dear young man," said the minister, "beware of thinking that you must be saved because you are not so bad as some others. Observe what the Scriptures say of all mankind; 'There is none that doeth good, no, not one.' (Rom. iii. 12.) 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' (Rom. iii. 23.) 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.' (Gen. viii. 21.) Now wherefore, my young man," proceeded the minister, "wherefore do you suppose that these strong declarations of man's depravity are used in the Bible, but in order that every mouth may be stopped, and every man be constrained to plead guilty before God? Your being free from the gross sins which some commit, will not excuse you for the pride, the evil thoughts, the carnal desires, the secret sins, of which you, as well as I, and every son of Adam, have been guilty. If we have been better outwardly than some others, it is more owing to the care of our parents, and the restraining grace of God, than to any good in ourselves. Be assured, therefore, that in the eyes of a just and holy God we are all counted unclean and utterly vile."

Joseph sighed, and looking hard at the minister, said, "How then, Sir, am I to be saved?"

"Not by any thing that you can do," replied the minister, "for, if your being better than some others would save you, why should JESUS CHRIST have lived a painful life, and died a shameful death, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself? My dear young man, you must either wholly part with your supposed merits, or with the Saviour himself. You must either consent to be thought a sick man, or send away your Physician."

"O, Sir," said Joseph, "then will I confess myself to be diseased, and apply to my Physician."

"I am glad to hear you make this declaration," said the minister; "because I am convinced that no man is disposed by nature to apply to the heavenly Physician. No man cometh unto CHRIST unless he is revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. And inasmuch as God the Spirit is all-powerful, I cannot doubt but he will accomplish that work in you which I trust he hath already commenced."

"But, Sir," said Joseph, "am I to understand that the LORD counts all sinners alike? God is merciful, I have often heard it

aid ; and I was yesterday told that he was too good to punish any one for a few faults."

"O how little," said the pious minister, "do they know of the human heart, who speak of the transgressions of the best of men as of a few pardonable errors ! Man is by nature at enmity with God. Remember our LORD's words to his own disciples, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ;' and the Scripture says, 'If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature.'"

"But, Sir," said Joseph, "there are some, as you well know, Sir, in our town, who talk much of this conversion, and of other such matters, whose lives are a disgrace to their profession ; and when I have seen and heard such persons, I have often thought what my mother and others say, to be strictly true."

"But," said the minister, "you must tell me what your mother says, before I can explain your doubts respecting her assertion."

"Why, Sir," said Joseph, "she says that she does not see but that those who do not pretend to religion are quite as good for the most part as those who make such a noise and stir about it."

The minister replied, "Notice the parable of the Pharisee and publican, which the Lord JESUS CHRIST spake to some who, like your mother, trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Self-righteousness is natural to the human heart, but it is founded in ignorance of God's holy law. By this holy law God will judge you, and not by comparing you with other sinners. All are sinners ; and be assured, that the only way of escape for any is, by flying for mercy to the Lord JESUS CHRIST. If all the good works that ever were done could be performed by one individual, they could not procure the pardon of a single sin, or make atonement for one breach of the law."

"Then, Sir," said Joseph, "if good works will not atone for sin, have we nothing of this sort to hope for from our sufferings ? I have been a great sufferer from my youth."

The minister replied, "My dear young man, the word of God will not allow us to imagine that the sufferings of a sinner can atone for sin. A sacrifice in order to be acceptable to God, must in the first place be without spot or blemish ; and in the second place, it must be voluntary. What we suffer in the body, we suffer not voluntarily, but in consequence of our sins : we cannot therefore place any confidence in our sufferings, because they are deficient in every point which can render suffering effectual to salvation. And seeing this to be the case, we must look for a Saviour whose sacrifice is at once pure and voluntary : and, praised be God, such a one is nigh to every sinner, expressly declaring, that 'whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out.'"

"Ah, Sir," said Joseph, "these are comfortable doctrines : but as I am a poor man, and no scholar, I fear that such matters as these are above me. Mrs. Barclay told me but yesterday, that religion may be very well for those who have learnin' but that

the want of it would be overlooked in a poor ignorant man, such as I am."

The minister replied, "It is written, 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.' (Isaiah liv. 13.) And St. Paul shows, that it is not by man's wisdom or learning that he can know any thing of God. (1 Cor. i.) Many promises of instruction are given to those who seek the knowledge of the LORD; and a divine teacher is appointed for such, whose communications have power to convey light and knowledge to the most dark and ignorant heart." Then taking up Joseph's Bible, which lay on a little table near the bed, he marked with his pencil the following among other passages for the young man's consideration. "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." (Ps. xxv. 8, 9.) "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 19.)

The young man thanked the minister heartily for this kindness, and said, "You have given me much comfort, Sir; and taught me to see things in a new light. I used to suppose, that if I *was but sincere, I was safe; and that if the LORD did not give me as much grace as he did to others, it was not my fault.* But I perceive, that I then had no sincerity, nor any desire for grace."

The pious minister answered "My young friend, the errors which you have been led to discover and confess are particularly common among ungodly persons. As to your views of *sincerity*—there was a time when the apostle Paul 'verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.' (Acts xxvi. 9.) He was sincere, no doubt, but in a wrong cause; till, being stopped short by the grace of God, he became a most zealous defender of that Saviour whom he had persecuted. The apostle, referring to this passage of his life, at a later period, speaks thus—'I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.' (1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.) 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first JESUS CHRIST might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.' (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.) And to that other erroneous sentiment of yours, namely, *that you cannot have grace if God vouchsafes it not; I make this reply—'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'* Moreover, while you are presuming to charge your Maker with injustice, are you diligently using those means of grace with which you are favored? If not, it surely becomes you to lay your hand on your mouth."

"Sir," said Joseph, "I heartily thank you for all your condescending kindness. You have assisted to set me right on

many important subjects, and I now see how vain a thing would be, for any man to attempt in his own strength *to work out his own salvation.*"

"My dear young man," said the minister, "I thank God that you have been brought to this reasonable conclusion: concerning which I may say to you as our LORD once said unto Simon, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee: but my Father which is in heaven.'" The minister then proceeded to set before him a striking outline of the great work of salvation, as it is set forth in the holy Scriptures; very earnestly admonishing him daily to ask wisdom of the great Father of lights, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

Poor Joseph shook the minister heartily by the hand, and, with tears in his eyes, requested that he would often repeat his visits — and I am happy to add, that it pleased the LORD so to bless the instructions of this worthy minister to the poor invalid, that he died at length in the blessed hope of acceptance with God through the merits and death of his Redeemer.

THE END.

SUNDAY EVENING

RECOLLECTIONS;

OR,

THE CHURCHMAN IN HIS CLOSET



"Forasmuch as after this life there is an account to be given to the righteous Judge, by whom all must be judged without respect of persons: I require you to examine yourself and your estate, both toward God and man: so that accusing and condemning yourself for your own faults, you may find mercy at our heavenly Father's hands, for Christ's sake, and not be accused and condemned in that fearful judgment."—*The Order for the Visitation of the Sick.*

NEW-YORK:

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Depository,



THE LORD'S DAY.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

IF you have any reverence for Almighty God, who is the greatest and best of Beings, and on whom you entirely depend for happiness, in this life and the next, remember His express command to “keep holy the Sabbath Day.”—If you have any love for your own souls, any desire to be taught by what means you may be blessed for ever in heaven;—Let nothing but sickness, or some other unavoidable hindrance prevent your attendance on the public Service of the Church every Lord's day. Diligently seek the Lord where He may be found; call upon Him in His “house of prayer,” and you will experience inward peace, and joy, and comfort; you will become better Christians and happier men; and you will have occasion, in the day of Judgment, to rejoice, that you had grace and wisdom to attend to this warning.

No. 41.

NEW-YORK:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY:

SUNDAY EVENING RECOLLECTIONS.

I HAVE been this day in the house of God, and have been engaged in his worship. It becomes me as a reasonable creature, and much more as a professing Christian, to inquire what were the feelings of my heart while I was in the house of God, and engaged in his worship. I read in the Scriptures, that "God is a Spirit, and that they who worship Him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." I am taught that they who "draw near unto Him with their lips, while their heart is far from him," are an abomination in his sight. How, then, have I been affected? Has this Lord's day been employed for the spiritual benefit of my immortal soul? Did I enter upon it in the morning with earnest desire and fervent prayer, that it might prove a blessing to me, by being the means of humbling me more deeply in a view of my sinfulness before God, and by strengthening my confidence in my blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST; by increasing my gratitude and love to Him; and by confirming my resolution of obeying His commandments, and of living to His glory? Have I kept up a desire after these blessings through the day, and have I found that these ends have been answered by my attendance on the means of grace? The Sabbath was appointed for these purposes, and I shall have to give an account to God, in the day of judgment, for the manner in which I have spent every Lord's day which I have been permitted to see, and the improvement I have made of it. Oh how many have passed by without improvement, and how much guilt lies on me on account of my misspent Sundays! Let me be humbled under the conviction of my sinfulness, and seek pardon before it be too late to obtain it.

But let me return to a recollection of the hours which are just past. They cannot be recalled; they are gone to be recorded in the book of God's remembrance against the awful day of judgment. Have not I reason to fear that they will appear against me, together with those of other Sabbaths, in that awful day? But, however guilty I may have been, let me not shun an inquiry, at this solemn season of recollection, into the state of my heart. What, then, have my feelings been this day? Have they been those of a contrite sinner, a thankful believer in the Gospel of CHRIST, a pensioner on the mercy of God, a candidate for eternal glory? How were my thoughts employed while I was in the house of God? Did I follow the minister in the confession of sin with feelings of my own sinfulness, sorrow on account of it, and an earnest desire after pardon and salvation? Did I hear him declare the mercy of God to true penitents, with an earnest desire that I might be found one of the

happy number, and partake of that mercy? Did I join heartily with the congregation in blessing God, "for redemption by our Lord JESUS CHRIST, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory," as one who felt himself indebted to that redemption by JESUS CHRIST, for the hope of escaping from the torments of hell and of obtaining eternal happiness? Alas, how often have I been thinking of other things, even the things of this world, while with my lips I have been uttering confessions of sin and petitions for pardon and salvation! What a solemn mockery of God is this! And how must He, to "whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," be offended by such hypocrisy as I have been thus guilty of before him!

It appears then, on a general view of the day past, that I am guilty before God. The sins of this Lord's day are many and great, and every one of them exposes me to the just anger of "Him who hath power to destroy both body and soul in hell." Without an interest in the atonement of CHRIST, I must "perish everlastingly." Let me then fall on my knees, and pray for mercy through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

But I will not content myself with this general review. I will enter into particulars, and while I endeavor to do so, may the LORD give me seriousness of heart, and a willingness to know and to acknowledge the worst of myself which may be discovered to me. I must know it either here or hereafter; and it is better to know it now while forgiveness may be obtained, than to come to the knowledge of it hereafter when the day of grace is past.

RECOLLECTIONS FOUNDED ON THE GENERAL CONFESSION.

I HAVE this day acknowledged, by uniting with my own lips in the confession of the Church, that I have "erred and strayed from God's ways like a lost sheep,—that I have followed too much the devices and desires of my own heart,—that I have offended against God's holy laws,—that I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and have done those things which I ought not to have done,—and that there is no health in me." Let me examine myself whether I have understood and felt my own words. I have confessed, then, that the thoughts of my heart and the acts of my life have been sinful before God. It is certainly true that, by the alienation of my affections from God, I have acted the part of a silly sheep which has gone astray from the shepherd's care, and from the pasture which he had provided, into a wilderness of want, danger, and misery. I have sought my happiness in the world, and not in the favor of God, in fellowship with Him, and in obedience to His will, wherein alone happiness can be found. And while I have been thus seeking my happiness in the world, I have been justly disappointed for I have never found what I have sought after.

Like a sheep in a desert land, I have found no suitable food for my soul, and have been constantly subject to tormenting fears from the expectation of death and the judgment to come. But have I laid to heart this my folly, so as to repent of it and to return to God? If I have not thus laid it to heart, what benefit shall I derive from making a confession of it with my lips? The confession, if unaccompanied with repentance, will only increase my misery *now* in the convictions of my own conscience, and my condemnation at the last day from the sentence of the great Judge of the living and the dead.

"I have followed too much the devices and desires of my own heart." My heart is, assuredly, a sinful heart, and therefore its "devices and desires," its schemes and endeavors to accomplish them, must all be sinful likewise. For can a polluted fountain send forth pure streams? Or can a corrupt tree bear good fruit? What have been the "devices and desires of *my* heart?" Have they not been engaged about securing happiness to myself independently of God, His favor and presence? Have I not loved other objects more than Him, or rather, instead of Him, and been intent on "serving divers lusts and pleasures" rather than on pleasing Him, the author of my existence, and the giver of all the blessings which I enjoy? Have not "the devices and desires of my own heart" been such, on many occasions, that, if they had not been restrained by the fear of disgrace and punishment in this world, or of the wrath of God in the world to come, they would have led me into the greatest actual crimes, and so have ruined me both in body and soul for ever? Should I not feel unwilling to have "the devices and desires of my own heart" made known to my fellow-creatures, or even to the dearest friend I have in the world? Should I not shrink with shame and fear from such an exposure of the thoughts of my heart? Let me remember, then, that they are all known to the infinitely pure and holy God; and that, unless they be now forgiven, they will all be brought forth to view at the day of judgment. Oh how great need have I of pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace!

But my confessions have not been confined to the sinfulness of my heart. For I have declared, "that I have offended against God's holy laws,—that I have left undone what I ought to have done, and have done what I ought not to have done." I have not loved and served God as I ought to have loved and served my Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. I have not made His word my rule, His love my motive, nor His glory my end. It was, and is, my bounden duty toward God, "to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honor his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life." This, "I have left undone;" for there has not been a day, nor an hour, no,—nor a minute in my life

in which I have done this. And in many cases have I not been guilty of special omissions of known duty? Have I not trifled away the Lord's day,—neglected the house of God and the ordinances of his worship; omitted "to call upon God" in private prayer, or profaned his name by using it in a form of prayer without reverence and godly fear?—Let me look over all the commandments, and see if I have not neglected that which is required by every one of them. Certain it is that I have acknowledged that I have transgressed every one of them; for after hearing them read I have said after each,* "LORD have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to keep this law." What need had I of mercy in reference to either of the ten commandments, if I had not broken it? and what hypocrisy was there in asking for mercy, if I did not feel that I had broken it!

But have I not failed in my duty toward my neighbor also, by not fulfilling the latter six commandments, as well as my duty toward God in transgressing the first four? Certainly, in the general tenor of my life I have not "loved my neighbor as myself, nor done to others as I would they should do unto me." Yet this is my duty, and I have failed in it; I am guilty before God. I may prove myself guilty in this respect, if I only consider the last of the ten commandments, which says, "*Thou shalt not covet.*" This commandment first brought guilt upon the conscience of St. Paul, (Rom. vii. 7,) and it condemns me also. There is not one of the commandments of the second table, any more than of the first, after the reading of which I had not reason to cry, "LORD have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to keep this law."

Alas, it is not by omission only,—by leaving "undone what I ought to have done,"—that I have "offended against God's holy laws;" for "I have" also "done," what I ought not to "have done." I have been guilty of many direct breaches of God's commandments. By consulting the records of my conscience I recollect many positive acts of rebellion against God. I have done in many instances what I knew to be forbidden by God's holy law, against the convictions and remonstrances of my own conscience, and in contempt and defiance of Him who is to "judge the quick and the dead at his coming." When I thus recollect many things which I have done, have I not reason to wonder at the patience of God, that he did not strike me dead in the very act, as he did Ananias and Sapphira, and send me at once to perdition? Surely, "It is of the LORD's mercies that I am not consumed, it is because his compassions fail not."

Well may I add, "There is no health," no spiritual health "in me." For wherein does spiritual health consist? What is the health of the soul? It consists in the power and inclination to love, serve, and enjoy God. I have no such power, and therefore "there is no health in me." There is no more health

* In the Communion Service

in my soul, than there would be in my body if I could not breathe without extreme difficulty, nor move hand or foot to help myself. If my body were wasted to a skeleton by a consumption, and my limbs distorted and rendered useless by rheumatism, it would afford a just representation of the state of my sinful soul. And if I do not feel myself to be "a *miserable* offender," it is because the disease of sin has destroyed my power of feeling.

Oh how properly, then, have I added to my confessions, "But thou, O LORD, have mercy upon me, a *miserable offender*. Spare thou me, O God, who confess my faults: restore thou me being penitent." To what has my sinfulness exposed me? In this inquiry I obtain instruction from another part of the service of the Church in which I have been engaged; for I have prayed in the Litany, "From thy wrath and from everlasting damnation, good LORD, deliver *me*." My sin then has exposed me to the wrath of God, and to everlasting damnation. And, oh how fearful a thing must it be to fall into the hands of the living God! "The wages of sin is death;" the wages of every sin, whether of omission or commission, is death eternal. For "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

etc.

RECOLLECTIONS FOUNDED ON THE ABSOLUTION.

THE review, O my soul, which thou hast taken of thine own confessions would drive thee to despair, and leave thee for ever without hope, if God had not "given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." But let me remember that this declaration is made in favor of those only who are "*penitent*."—Am I, then, one of the number?—With a view to determine this awfully-important question, let me inquire into the nature of true penitence.

I learn, then, from the word of God, that penitence is a state of soul, in which a sinner, feeling all that he has acknowledged in the service of the Church to be true of himself, is heartily sorry for his sins, afraid of the consequences of them, and thereby rendered anxious to obtain pardon for the guilt of them, and deliverance from the power of them. This is what he prays for when he adds to his confession, "But thou, O LORD, have mercy upon me, a *miserable* offender. Spare thou me" from the punishment which I have deserved. "Restore thou me" to the holiness which I have lost. If then a sense of my sins have not made me "*miserable*,"—if "the remembrance of sin be not grievous to me, and its burden intolerable;"* I am not *penitent*, and consequently not included among those, the absolution and remission of whose sins the ministers of God have power and

* The Confession in the Communion Service

commandment to pronounce. If I am not anxious above all other things to obtain absolution and remission of them, and to be restored from my sinful state to a state of holiness and communion with God, I am not "*penitent*," and therefore have nothing to do with this declaration of forgiveness.

But how may I become penitent? Can I make myself so? Can I awaken my own conscience to do its duty, and change my own heart so that it may hate sin which it has so long loved, and love holiness which it has so long hated? Certainly not: an Ethiopian might as soon change his black skin to a white one, or the leopard all his spots into one uniform color. The Church to which I belong has therefore taught me to pray for the grace of repentance to Him, who is "exalted to give repentance and remission of sins." Repentance is one part of the great salvation which CHRIST hath procured for us and bestows upon us, "wherefore let me beseech Him to grant me true repentance and His Holy Spirit."* "Turn thou me, O good LORD, and so shall I be turned."† If I am earnest in the use of this prayer, I shall know what true repentance means, and I shall have also the means of knowing that He who "pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel," hath pardoned me.

But what were my feelings to-day when the minister, in the name and by the authority and commandment of "God, the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST," "declared and pronounced to his people the absolution and remission of their sins?" Were my feelings what they ought to have been? Did I feel as a criminal who had been condemned would feel on hearing his free pardon read to him? Did I feel deep humiliation on account of my sins, and thankful love to my Saviour, in whose blessed name, and on account of whose sufferings and death, the absolution was pronounced? Did I earnestly embrace the message of reconciliation with God, as a drowning man would lay hold of the rope thrown out to him to save him? Was I conscious of indignation against myself and my sins, and a determination to seek after the renewing grace of God that I might offend him no more? Did I pray for his "Holy Spirit, that those things might please him" in which I was then engaged, "and that the rest of my life hereafter might be pure and holy, so that at the last I might come to his eternal joy, through JESUS CHRIST my Lord?" In short, did I feel as I may suppose the poor sinful woman felt, to whom our LORD said, "I do not condemn thee; go and sin no more;" or like her who "loved much, because much was forgiven her?"

Alas, how often have I heard this joyful declaration without any suitable feelings in my heart! and even this day how little

* Absolution.

† Service for Ash-Wednesday

have I felt as I ought to feel!* Were it possible for this absolution to be pronounced among the lost souls in hell, in how different a manner (may we suppose†) would it be received from that in which I have received it: they know the bitterness of sin; and, methinks, so soon as the minister of the Most High had shown his commission, proved his authority, and declared his message, the “weeping” would be hushed, “the wailing” silenced, and the “gnashing of teeth” stopped. The deep gloom of “outer darkness” would be converted into the cheerful dawn of morning, and the wailings of despair be exchanged for songs of joy and thanksgiving. The hard heart would be melted, the enmity against God be changed into love, and a universal exclamation arise, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all the benefits which he hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and give thanks to the name of the LORD.”—Yet, independently of divine mercy, wherein lies the difference between me a sinner on earth and sinners in hell? It lies only in this, that on me the sentence of condemnation has been pronounced,—and on them it has been executed. I am still where mercy may be obtained, if I seek for it in God’s appointed way, —whereas they are shut out from all hope of mercy.—And if this be so, oh with what feelings of joy, of gratitude, and of love, with what earnest desire to live to God, and to show forth his praise, should I hear that “he pardoned and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel!” Blessed be his name,—in order that the declaration of forgiveness may have the more weight, and come home with a fuller sanction to the afflicted conscience and the broken heart, “He hath given power and commandment to his ministers” to make it. May I be enabled to receive their word “as the word of God,” and “be filled” thereby “with joy and peace in believing!”

But how, O my soul, has this inestimable blessing, the forgiveness of thine innumerable sins, been procured for thee? The minister of God has informed thee, that he with whom thou hast to do in this most important transaction, is the Father of our “Lord JESUS CHRIST,” and that it is “through JESUS CHRIST our Lord,” that pardon, repentance, God’s Holy Spirit, and eternal joy, have been procured and are vouchsafed. Thine own plea, my soul, hath been, if thou hast been sincere in thy supplication,—“By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross

* Many persons ignorantly repeat the Absolution after the Minister, and thereby prove their utter unconsciousness of what they are engaged in. The act of Absolution is the office of the Minister speaking in the name of God, and is to be listened to by the people in solemn silence and humility of heart.

† It is not here supposed that any thing but the grace of God can change the heart of a fallen creature. But such are the effects which, according to human probability, might be expected to result from the proclamation of pardon among those who are suffering the sentence of the divine law in the place of torment.

and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; good LORD deliver me.”—From what? “From God’s wrath and from everlasting damnation,” which I have deserved by my sins, and from which I can be delivered by no other means than by the atonement and intercession of my blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Thus am I taught the infinite evil of sin, since the sacrifice of God my Saviour alone could deliver me from its punishment. And thus am I shown the great love wherewith God hath loved me, in that “He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” May I give, then, “most humble and hearty thanks to God, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, for the redemption of the world” (and particularly of my own lost soul from sin and death everlasting) “by the death and passion of our Saviour CHRIST, both God and man, who did humble himself even to the death upon the cross for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God” (who were before “the children of wrath” and of the devil) “and exalt us to everlasting life.” May I therefore “always remember the exceeding great love of my master and only Saviour JESUS CHRIST, thus dying for me, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to me! To Him, therefore, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, let me give (as I am most bounden) continual thanks, submitting myself wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.”*

RECOLLECTIONS FOUNDED ON THE COLLECT USED IN THE
COMMUNION SERVICE BEFORE THE READING OF THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS.

IN the worship of God this day I have been engaged in addressing Him, “unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid.” Have I been duly sensible of this? To him all the secrets of my heart are as clear as the simplest truth I read is to me. He knows whether the words of my lips have expressed the desires of my heart. To him all the corruptions of my heart, which in the general language of the Church I have confessed, are truly known; for “from him no secrets are hid.” Not only does he see the outward act of sin, though committed in the most secret place; but all the filthy, unrighteous, and ungodly thoughts of the heart of man—of my own heart—are exposed to his view. Oh what a sight, what an object of abomination, does my sinful heart present to the eyes of infinite holiness,—to Him “who is

* Communion Service.

of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity" of any kind without abhorrence!

It was necessary to thy salvation and happiness, O my soul, not only that CHRIST, the Son of God, should die for thy sins, but also that God the HOLY GHOST should cleanse the thoughts of thy heart by his inspiration. For as "without shedding of blood there is no remission," and no blood could avail for this purpose but blood of infinite value; so it is also written that "without holiness no man shall see the LORD," and without divine "inspiration" conversion of heart from sin to holiness, from the world to God, is impossible. "No man can quicken his own soul." "If any man be in CHRIST," that is, a Christian, "he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

And whereas I cannot escape punishment without obtaining a pardon for my sins, so neither can I become happy without becoming holy. Hence I find it written, "Ye must be born again." I cannot serve God without new desires and powers bestowed on me by his grace,—I cannot enjoy communion with him here without having my heart cleansed from the love of sin. I cannot dwell with him in heaven without being made like him; for nothing that is unholy can enter into his presence. I am taught by my blessed Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, that none but "the pure in heart shall see God." O may I feel the necessity of being renewed in heart and spirit,—of being "created anew in CHRIST JESUS!" May I clearly see that "the carnal mind" could no more enjoy the spiritual employments and pleasures of the heavenly state, than swine can relish the employments and pleasures which are peculiar to reasonable creatures! May I remember that holiness is happiness, and sin misery! Angels are happy because they are holy, and devils are miserable because they are unholy. An unholy creature carries hell about with him in his own bosom.

Most wisely, therefore, have I been engaged, while I have been praying that "God would cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of his HOLY Spirit, that I may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." O may I be enabled heartily to say "*Amen*" to this prayer!

I am here taught what will be the effect of the cleansing inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. It will be "the love of God shed abroad in my heart." This, indeed, and this only, is happiness. This is heaven begun. Angels are holy, for they love God; devils are unholy, for they hate him. Do I resemble the former or the latter,—angels, or devils? By praying for the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that I *may* perfectly love him, I confess that I have too much resembled devils by not loving him with all my heart. "The carnal mind is enmity against God!" Am I now anxious that I may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name?

I discern the propriety of placing this prayer before the ten commandments. "For this is love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." I am to judge whether I love God, by inquiring whether it be my earnest desire and constant endeavor to keep his commandments. And when I reconsider the confessions of sin which I have made, I shall see how needful it is that God should "cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit," in order "that I may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

But have I entered heartily into this prayer? Have I felt the necessity of being made holy,—that unless I am holy, I cannot enter heaven, since "without holiness no man shall see the LORD?" Have I painfully felt that the thoughts of my heart want cleansing, as being naturally sinful and at enmity with God? Do I clearly understand that holiness consists in loving God, and that love to him will produce universal and unfeigned obedience to his commandments? Do I know, by experience, that I cannot make myself holy by destroying the enmity of my heart against God and whatever is spiritual and pleasing to him, and by planting in its stead love to him and to spiritual things? Do I know also, by experience, that the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT is absolutely necessary to this end? Have I indeed earnestly prayed for that inspiration, and am I looking and waiting for an answer to my prayer? Do I long and pray that I may be prepared to dwell with *holy* men and *holy* angels, and with him in whose presence they cry, "Holy,—holy, —holy —is the LORD of hosts?"

THE END



THESE BAD TIMES.

BEING called to visit a sick friend at a distance, I got into the stage coach at S——, early on a fine December morning, and as soon as I was seated I took, as is my custom, a survey of my companions. An elderly lady, in deep mourning, and with a strong expression of sorrow on her countenance, sat by my side, and a very benevolent-looking old man sat opposite me. After the usual observations on the weather, he seemed to think it necessary to make an *apology* for his riding inside the coach on so fine a morning; “for,” he added, smiling, “it seems a shame for an old farmer like me, to be paying double price for doing what I do not like: I am so used to fresh air, that the outside suits me best in *all* ways; but not having been well lately, my careful wife made me promise not to run any risks, and the doctor told me on no account to get wet while I was taking the medicine he ordered me.” I am sorry, I said, to find you *need* a doctor. I should not have guessed it by your *looks*. “No Sir,” he replied, “I dare say not, for God has given me more blessings than most men, and among the chief I reckon good health; but last harvest, it so happened I over-reached myself, and it brought on an inward complaint, for which our apothecary advised me to consult some of the great men in London. I did not agree to this for a long time, but the tears of my wife, and the looks of my children, when they said, ‘Dear father, if not for your *own* sake, do go for *ours*’, left me not a word to say; and now I am returning to them, Sir, quite satisfied that I am in the hands of a wise and gracious God, and I leave the event cheerfully to him, whether for life or death: this one thing I know, I am *far* better pleased that I have over-reached *myself*, than I could ever have been again in this world, if I had over-reached any one of my *fellow creatures*.” The good old man spoke the last sentence *playfully* yet *seriously*, and it conveyed much truth to my mind. “May I ask,” said I, “to whom you applied for advice?” “To Mr. T——, Sir; and to the day of my death I shall never forget him. There is a seriousness in his look and manner which wins a sick person’s confidence. Before I was admitted, I heard him say to a lady who was leaving him, ‘Many come here to whom I can give *no hope*, but I am glad to say I can to *you*.’ Perhaps my own situation made me more womanish, Sir, than usual, but the tears came into my eyes, and I said in my heart, ‘May the Lord himself be thy comforter in thy hour of need.’ With this feeling I went to him, and his manner to me confirmed it all. I am more and more pleased

when I think that God has given so feeling a heart and manner to one whose daily task it is to mitigate calamity; and many times have I prayed that he may not be wanting when 'God makes up his jewels.' I should think that a man so familiar with *death*, must naturally be led to pray earnestly for life everlasting." He seemed to wait for a reply, but I felt too painfully that this is not *always* the case; so I turned the conversation by asking what hope Mr. T. had given to *him*? "Exactly as much as I expected: he said I might last some years with care, but that I must use no violent exertion. I feel very grateful to God that I am so gently dealt with; for in the course of nature I must soon leave the world, and I consider my present state as a fresh call 'to set my house in order.' But I believe what pleased me most was being spared the task of telling those I best love that, in the language of the world, 'there was no hope.' The worst part of the accident to me was the silent anguish of the best of wives, and the most dutiful of children." "I doubt not," I said, "you have brought up your family in the fear of God, and I have seen very few instances where *that* has not brought a rich reward to the parents." The old lady heaved a very deep sigh, but nothing more was said, as we stopped at the gate of a handsome house, and whilst waiting for a passenger I observed a beggar of rather an unusual appearance: his poverty seemed more assumed than *real*, and the expression of his countenance so *bad*, that I confess I felt an emotion of *dislike* rather than of *pity*. He anxiously watched the gate, and as a young lady approached, he vehemently besought her charity, and held out some tracts. She looked at the titles, and saying carelessly, "I am no Methodist," was about to pass him, when he dexterously put his hand in another part of his basket and offered her a book of a different sort. She took it, gave him some halfpence, put it in a bag which hung on her arm, and got into the coach. All this had happened while her luggage was being adjusted, and my attention having been attracted to the man, I ceased not to read his countenance as long as I could see it; and never shall I forget the fiend-like expression of joy with which he saw the book safely put in the bag. The halfpence seemed a matter of indifference. He then turned to the maid-servant who had brought the luggage, but with what success I know not, as at that moment we proceeded on our journey. The young lady who had joined us was fashionably dressed, and was going home from school. I fancied she looked rather disappointed when she had examined her elderly companions; but the kind-hearted farmer turned to her with great mildness, and said he supposed she would think every minute an hour till she saw her parents. She said she should be *glad* to see them, but she was very happy at school. "It is right to make ourselves contented wherever it is our duty to be," he replied; "but I know when my boys used to come home, it was quite a jubilee to us all. They came but once a year; for as I could not afford to keep

them long at school, I looked out for one that gave but few holidays. Pray, Miss, how long are yours?" "The *vacation*, Sir, begins next Wednesday, and lasts five weeks." "But this is only Thursday—how comes it you run away before the time?" "Few of the masters attend the last week, and mamma wrote to say they were going to have a large party, and she wanted me to play to them to-morrow." The old man seemed to ponder on the word *play*, and I asked if she was *fond* of music? "Not *particularly*," she said, "but there was no well-educated person now who did not play; so like others, she spent a good deal of time on it." This young person had now given *me* a subject for meditation: for I thought what different meanings may be affixed to the words *well educated*. If, thought I, a strict account was kept of the hours spent in music, and those devoted to the care of the soul, how startled some well-meaning young women would be at the vast difference on the *wrong side*. While I was silent, my old friend asked the terms of the school, and was answered, about fifty guineas, besides the masters. I heard him say in an under tone, "THESE BAD TIMES!" I believe our young friend did not like our questions, for she took out a copy of Thomson's Seasons. I reflected how many more suitable books might have been given to her; and certainly one of the signs of "these bad times" is what I call *tearing open the rose-bud*. We seem anxious to leave as little time as possible between childhood and womanhood. We cut short by every means in our power, that precious season when the mind is gradually opening to the cares of life, and by books and company we often hurry our children into those cares before we have prepared them how to conduct themselves under them. While I was thus meditating, the young lady had put up her poems, and taken out the pamphlet she had just bought; when the old lady, who had kept a profound silence during our journey, suddenly leaned forward and snatched it out of her hand. We were all startled, and in an agony of grief, she wept aloud. The poor girl, who at first looked indignant, now gazed with pity and astonishment, which indeed seemed to be the general feeling. At length, and not without a violent effort, the old lady, turning to me, thus explained the mystery:—"You seem, Sir, to be a clergyman; and as such will take an interest in what I am about to say; and you, my dear young lady, will forgive me when you know my *motive*. I have just returned from the grave of a most promising young man, 'the only son of his mother, and she a widow.' In his early days he showed talents, and his too-indulgent parent was led into her first great error by suffering him to choose his *own place of worship*, at a time of life when I fear *improvement* was the *last* thing he thought of in making the choice. Sometimes a walk with a friend to a neighboring meeting separated him from his mother; sometimes he went to a distant church, to hear a popular preacher. This led the way occasionally to his only going out to *walk*, and not

to *worship* • and by this means he learned to hallow the *sabbath-day* less than formerly. Afterward he became so critical, that plain preaching, though sound orthodoxy, would not suit him, and ‘he could,’ as he said, ‘improve as much at home.’ All this grieved his poor mother, but as the time approached when he was to pass some years in a merchant’s counting-house, in London, she flattered herself his notions in religion would become more settled, and she sent him into the world not without many prayers and tears, but certainly without the ‘sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith.’ She would have sacrificed her life for *him*, but she had never taught him to sacrifice one selfish gratification for *her*, and he went forth expecting those who were his *friends* would see him as his mother did, and that all who did *not*, must be his *enemies*. Thus ill-prepared to wage war with his sinful inclinations, he went to London; and very soon after, some young men who were in the same counting-house, saw his weakness, and, like the master whom they served, they began their insidious attack. At first they flattered his talents and his love for his mother; they then laughed at his regularity in writing to her. At length they sneered at his observance of the *sabbath*. All days, they said, were alike to him who was ‘of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;’ and why should we presume to know the exact day for the sabbath better than the Jews? In short, from one step, they led this poor youth to another; and on pretence of taking him to hear ‘a good speaker,’ which was always a snare to him, he was led into the Rotunda, and that pamphlet was, I believe, the first *infidel* work he ever saw. A man!—ought I not rather to say a DEMON? whom he met in the Rotunda, gave it to him, and offered him the loan of others, which he undertook to say would prove the truth of that very blasphemous work you now hold, Sir, in your hand. O! my dear young lady, be not afraid of ‘the arrow that flieth at night, nor for the pestilence that walketh in noonday,’ if you have sought and found through grace, ‘the pearl of great price,’ even that Saviour who alone can save you; but shun, as you would a *viper*, such books and such company as I have been speaking of. I hear on good authority that there are many employed like the wretch who sold this book, in distributing even *gratis*, such works as will lead our youth to perdition.” May I ask, said I, any further particulars of your ill-fated young friend? “O yes, Sir,” she replied, “for the sake of this young lady I would repeat the horrid tale, let it cost me what it would. His mother soon mourned over the altered style of her son’s letters;—then they came not. At last, she resolved to go and see him, and O, what a sight for a parent! In spite of all the infidel principles he had been taught at the Rotunda and elsewhere, his conscience flashed conviction on his mind that there is a God who will judge the earth by his Son, JESUS CHRIST, and that he must shortly stand at his bar. The conflict produced fever, and when he heard of his mother’s arrival, he

added to all his other sins that of suicide ; but he lived long enough to reproach her for her false indulgence, and to curse in anguish of soul those demons of destruction who had led him into this fatal delusion. His last words were — ‘Mother, I feel that there is a great and *terrible* God.’” Here the narrator ceased. Again she wept aloud, and in vain I tried to comfort her. She left us soon after, sinking apparently more under the weight of family affliction than of age. The young lady seemed impressed by what she had heard, and after a silence of some minutes, my friend, the farmer, said — “Can there be no legal stop put to these poisonous lectures, Sir?” I assured him that I understood it was a matter of as deep regret to those in power as to us : but in this world evil is so mixed up with good, that we know not how to *wish* aright. A free press is at once a blessing and a curse, and this may be said of other things out of which this dreadful evil has grown. At this time the coach stopped at rather a mean looking farm-house, and great was the surprise of my old friend and myself, to find this was the young lady’s *home*. Bowing coldly to us, and without any peculiar pleasure in her countenance, she entered the house. “Sir,” said the old man, smiling, “I am sometimes at a loss to think where my lads are to find wives when they want them ; for I am sure most of the farmers’ daughters I see and hear of, are only fit to be put in a glass case to be looked at. Only think of the poor girl who has just left us ; what sort of a wife will she make ? A farmer of sense would *scorn* her, for she thinks music the thing of most importance ; whereas the only music heard in a young farmer’s house should be that of the *churn*. We talk of the bad times, Sir ; but I fear we have mainly contributed to *make* them so. When I look around me and within me, I am not surprised God has sent us two wet harvests : I only wonder he suffers some of us ‘to cumber the ground.’ The other day I was at market, and a farmer rode into the town on a fine blood mare, and dressed like the greatest lord in the land : it so happened he owed me a few pounds, and being disappointed in another quarter, I sought him out in the course of the day, and found him with a bottle of wine before him. I asked him to settle our account, if convenient : he put on a long face and said — ‘Corn fetches no money now, for these times are so bad, no one has any money to spend ; I really must beg you to wait a little longer.’ I gave a very significant look at his *wine* and his *dress*, and left him, thinking to myself what a want of common honesty it shows, when a man can ride such a horse and drink wine, who cannot pay a trifling debt. Surely, Sir, it is provoking God’s anger thus to act. Nor is it an uncommon thing to see a man who was in the *Gazette* a month ago, and paid, perhaps, a few shillings in the pound, strutting about soon after, a greater man than ever. Yes, these *are* bad times when such things can be done repeatedly. It is not bad prices or bad harvests, though they are very trying, which make me ‘remble for the farmer ; but we seem, i’ I may

so speak, to be *all one of joint*. We talk of being poor men, but we act and bring up our families as though we were *rich* ones. When I see the girls' heads all over curl papers in the morning, and bedizened in the afternoon, I often fear their *heads* cost them far more time and pains than their *hearts*, 'out of which are the issues of life.' Farming has never gone well since the master left off going out in the morning with his men to work, and the mistress was betimes in the dairy, not merely to *look on*, but to 'labor with her hands.' Nor out of all the failures I have known, do I recollect many of the *working* sort who have been ruined; and when they feel the times, where do they begin to retrench? just at the *wrong end*: they cut off some gift to the *poor*, instead of some luxury on *themselves*. I do not speak of men who farm their own estates, free and unencumbered; but of men like myself, born to eat our bread literally 'by the sweat of our brow.' I seldom go into a modern farm-house, but I think of those of former days, and I say to myself, yes, these are bad times indeed! I heard the same outcry in London,—'No money to be had;' but when I looked at the shops, and heard how tradesmen live, I was equally astonished as at those in my own line of life. I heard also of the playhouses being crowded night after night: now if the general distress is so great, who has *spirits* to go to a play? and if men have not money to pay their just debts, how *dare* they squander what is not their own, on vain amusements?" All this is very true, I replied; but now we are alone, may I ask how you have brought up your own family; for I think I shall learn some useful lessons. "I hardly dare hope to teach *you*, Sir; but I will willingly give you the outlines of my history. My wife, happily for me, had been brought up in the old-fashioned school: I had prayed to God to direct this most important step of my life, and to lead me to one whom I could look up to, as not merely a *nominal*, but a *real Christian*, and I have every reason to think my prayer was heard and answered. She knows her own sinfulness, and therefore can pity *my* sins. She has been taught the value of a throne of grace, and therefore is anxious to lead all around her there, to seek the same abundant grace and mercy which the Holy Spirit has shed so richly on her own heart. In what the world calls accomplishments, she is sadly deficient; for she was never taught either French or music; but she knew what was far better,—she *kept accounts well*, and I believe to this day can tell how every pound which passed through her hands was spent: by this means, Sir, when our family increased, or times grew bad, she knew where to contract our personal expenses best: to this common, or perhaps I should say, *uncommon*, accomplishment, I am sure I am indebted some hundred pounds. Another of the LORD's mercies was our being placed in the parish of a faithful follower of CHRIST. Our Rector, Sir, is a friend to us all: his charity is unbounded; and as a father, he watches diligently over the souls of all committed to his care. He is

ready at all times to advise, console, or admonish us ; and I often think of the welcome which awaits him—' Well done, good and faithful servant,' till my old heart burns within me." Has he a good wife? I inquired, for ladies are very useful helps in a parish. " Yes, Sir, a *very* good one ; she helps him in all his labors of love ; yet I never see a fault in my Rector but when I look at *her*." *Indeed!* said I, that is the most extraordinary thing I have heard you say all day. " Nevertheless it is *true*, I think he suffers too much *dress* in his family. I sometimes fear the finery in the parson's pew attracts more attention from the giddy ones than the words of eternal life, so sweetly sounding in their ears. A small spot in a family like *that* is seen a long way off, and I hope it does not proceed from want of charity in me to name it, Sir." I had so often mourned over the same thing in households very dear to me, and in characters truly good, that I was glad to change the subject, and I asked him how he had contrived to save himself from these bad times as well as he appeared to have done? He replied, " Our landlord wished to sell the farm about seven years ago, and as God had taught us that adding to our *luxuries* was not adding to our *comforts*, we laid by a considerable sum when corn sold *well*, by which means we were enabled to buy the farm, with a little assistance ; and as I have been taught from my earliest youth never to consider any money my own while I owe a farthing, we continued to live in the same frugal way. Thus, Sir, when these bad times came, we were in some measure prepared for them ; and having but one heart and one purse in our house, we do what we can in the way of duty, and leave the event with God. I feel persuaded if, in this great distress, we all humbled our souls before the Lord, and did individually what in him lies to lessen the load of national *sin*, we should do more toward mending these bad times than even the ministers can do in taking off the malt duty." I had now come to the village where my friend lived, and to my great joy he proved to be the farmer's good Rector, for he told me he could see his home, and his sons waiting at the gate ! so indeed it proved, and behind them his two modest-looking daughters. The good old lady was at the door, and never did I see a more heartfelt welcome than awaited my old friend. I merely said, as I shook him by the hand, there is " that peace " *here* " which the world knoweth not of." He answered, " To God be all the glory. I trust, Sir, if I see you no more on earth, we shall meet again in heaven." His heart was full, for he could not but contrast his own pious children with the victim of infidelity of whom we had so lately been hearing ; and we parted ; but as I found my friend the Rector much better than I had expected, I requested him to go with me before I left the parish to call on my old companion, as I was anxious to see something of his family. To this he gladly assented, saying, " I consider them as my crown of rejoicing even *here* ; for it is unknown how much good that old couple

do, by *example alone*. If any of my Sunday scholars go there as servants, I feel at once their souls will be as duly attended to as their bodies. Twice a day the old man collects his household around him, and solemnly commits their and his own soul to God in fervent prayer. If any of the laborers or their families are sick, one or other of this excellent family minister in every way to their necessities, and prove the truth of that text—‘A word spoken in due season, how good is it.’ The value of a few such families in a country parish cannot be duly appreciated in this world; but ‘He who seeth in secret shall reward them openly.’” By this time we had reached the farmer’s: the whole household was busily employed. Their pastor was received with looks of love and veneration, and even *I* was recognised as a *friend*. There was mutual congratulation on the amended health of the Rector and the good farmer, and never did I see a family where piety and peace seemed more decidedly to dwell.

Ever since that visit, when I hear people complain of “THESE BAD TIMES,” I say to myself, I wonder whether in the *good* times they practised frugality and industry like my good old companion, and whether they now try his receipt for mending these *bad* times, by personal holiness and fervent prayer?

THE END.

UNFRUITFUL FIG-TREE.

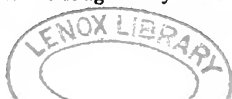
"A CERTAIN man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, behold these three years come I seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit—well: and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down."

The *Man* who had the fig-tree is ALMIGHTY GOD. The *vineyard* in which this tree was planted is the *Church*,—where the pure Word of God is preached; where every man may learn "what he must do to be saved" from his sins, and "how he ought to walk and to please God;" where it is provided that he may unite in prayer with his brethren every sabbath-day, and "ask and receive, that his joy may be full;" (*John* xvi. 24;) and where also his soul may be strengthened and refreshed, from time to time, by the "body and blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper."

The *fig-tree* itself represents some careless unthankful person, who is throwing all these great advantages away. Perhaps he may sometimes attend public worship—but his mind being wholly taken up with worldly matters, he "makes light" (*Matt.* xxii. 5) of the Gospel: is under no serious concern for the saving of his soul; and, in his practice, is one of those "fools who make a mock at sin." (*Prov.* xiv. 9.)

The owner of the vineyard came and *sought fruit* on this fig-tree. This represents God's reasonable expectations that they who have the light should *use* it. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (*Luke* xii. 48.) The fig-tree stood not by the high-way side, but was placed with great care in a rich soil, and within a safe enclosure. In the same manner the sinner under the Gospel may well say, in comparing himself with others, "the lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground." And he should hold himself bound to render God his own with usury. But all are not sensible of their obligations as they ought to be.

When the lord of the vineyard looked for fruit upon the fig-tree, he *found none*. Observed absolutely none. Not so much as a *little*. For though such persons as the fig-tree stands for, most commonly think of themselves that they are good, and that they do many good things, yet the truth is, that they are *ungodly* altogether. Though they do some things which God



has commanded,—and worse it would be if they did them not—yet they do nothing, *because* God commands it. He is not in their thoughts by choice—they live without any serious desire to please *him*; and very often when, without having the love of God in them, they have done some right actions from motives merely worldly, they are proud of them, and unduly trust in them; and therefore those actions bear no value in the sight of God.

God, however, in his great mercy, waits awhile to see whether sinners will mend; and does not proceed to severe rebukes immediately. The owner of the fig-tree, though he observed its unfruitfulness all along, *did not complain of it at first*. But at length he said to the dresser of his vineyard, “*Lo! these three years come I seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none: Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*” An unfruitful tree is of no use. It seems a discredit to the husbandman to let it stand. It only takes up room which might be better filled, therefore, why not cut it down at once? And why not cut down an unfruitful sinner at once? It seems not at all for God’s glory that such an one should be spared. He is of no use. “He turns away his ear from hearing the law.” He “does despite to the Spirit of Grace” in the Gospel. He “hateth knowledge and doth not choose the fear of the LORD.” He will not “enter into the kingdom of God himself, and many, perhaps, who would enter in, he hinders.” Why should not death seize him instantly, and carry him away to his own place, where at least he might glorify God’s justice, by suffering what his sins have so justly merited. Thus God not seldom seems to speak when his providence stretches the sinner unexpectedly on a bed of sickness, or some accident has overtaken him, of which the issue hangs in doubt.

But, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”—See what a friend with the Almighty ungrateful sinners have. “Lord,” replies the dresser of the vineyard, “let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: and if it shall bear fruit, *well*.” The *dresser of the vineyard* is the Lord JESUS CHRIST. And, like that compassionate shepherd, (See *Luke xv.*) who goes out after his lost sheep into the wilderness, he thinks of ungodly men, and pleads for them when they think not of him at all. Possibly more forbearance may be extended to the sinner with good effect. He has wasted much time very wilfully—but let him have a little more. Raise him up from his bed of sickness—deliver him from going down into the pit. He has abused his advantages very basely; let them, nevertheless, be restored to him, and increased; let him have more good instruction, more calls and warnings. Such kindness—with the Bible and the teacher at hand to help him to the right interpreting of it—such kindness is well fitted to convince him of the great goodness of God, whom he regards so little, and of his own folly in keeping at such a distance from him.

And it may be that he will *consider*, and repent, and “bring forth fruits meet for repentance,” and become, through divine grace, a new man, and a good man, and learn, at last, the fear of the LORD, and the value of his own soul, and of his Saviour. And if so,—*well*. In *that case*, he may be spared for ever. It will be to the glory of God’s mercy; holy angels (see *Luke* xv.) in heaven will rejoice at it: it will be for the honor of him whom the Father delighteth to honor; as well as for the unspeakable good of the sinner himself, who “having escaped the corruption which is in the world, through lust, shall thenceforth be made a partaker of the divine nature;” (2 *Pet.* i. 4;) and, in the end, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

But mark what follows. If the fig-tree, spared so long, cared for so anxiously, labored for so undeservedly, shall *not* bear fruit in consequence—“*Then* (says the dresser of the vineyard) *after that thou shalt cut it down.*” Observe, it is the vine-dresser, not the *owner*, who says this. CHRIST will stand between sinners and the curse of the law for a time; he has “given his back to the smiters,” (*Isa.* l. 6,) and his body to the cross, that he may do so; but he will not do so for ever. If they will not turn, even *he* “hath bent his bow, and made it ready.” (*Ps.* vii. 12.) In that case, even the “*one mediator between God and man,*” will become man’s adversary; and “those mine enemies,” he will say, “who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me!” (*Luke* xix. 27.) It is written, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up;” (*Ps.* xxvii. 10;) but if we thrust away the LORD from us, so that *he* forsaketh us, and, worse than that, setteth himself *against* us, who may take us up *then*? Who may deliver us? Must not God’s patience be *accounted* for? And shall not the abusers of it find, at last, that it would have been better for *them* had they never been so borne with and waited for at all?

Now if any person shall read this, who at this day resembles the fig-tree when it stood in the vineyard without fruit, let him see his danger, and seek the one way by which he may escape.

How is it that thou art spared? Not because God takes no notice: “his eyelids try the children of men.” (*Ps.* xi. 4.) Not because God is not angry with thee: “God is angry with the wicked every day.” (*Ps.* vii. 11.) Thou art spared because CHRIST pleads. But he pleads not that thou mayest have more time to sin, but that thou mayest have more time to *turn*. Then, “turn thee, turn thee, from thine evil way; for why wilt thou die?” This is the only use which thou canst make of the respite granted, either to God’s glory, or for thine own advantage.

However, thou *wilt* turn, thou sayest. But, let me ask thee, *when*? If *now*, this instant thou wilt fall down upon thy knees, and ask God to turn thee; *to-day*, if thou wilt hear his voice—this is what becomes thee, and thou shalt have help enough. But no—so great a work may not be set about so hastily; thou wilt begin

to-morrow, or some short time hence. Now let things be stated fairly. A resolution to turn to-morrow, comes just to this, and to no more—I will run all hazards, tempt God and sin to-day, with my eyes wide open. This is all that is settled in thy resolution : for how knowest thou what shall be on the morrow ? For what is thy life ! Or what command hast thou, even should to-morrow come, over the treasury of God's free grace ? Read the history of Felix. "When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." (*Acts* xxiv. 25.) So Felix had discovered that he had need to turn. Instead of doing so, however, "Go thy way," he says, "for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Fool that he was ! he let the convenient season slip, and such another never came. His conscience was impressed no more. his "heart was hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Now thou art about to do the very same thing. How knowest thou that the very same consequences shall not follow ? Why should the fear of hell, or the hope of heaven, or the sense of God's goodness—all of which thou despisest to-day—have more weight to-morrow ? Thy heart will be harder to-morrow for this very contempt of God's warning voice, which thou art going to be guilty of to-day ; and thou wilt put things off just as thou dost now, only with less fear and remorse of conscience. And how much longer is thy God to wait for thee ? Hear St. Peter : "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day : the LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the LORD *will* come as a thief in the night.—Wherefore, beloved, be *diligent*, that ye may be found in him, without spot and blameless : and account that *the long-suffering of our LORD is salvation.*" (1 *Pet.* iii. 8—15.)

Let me end by putting a prayer into thy mouth, which may God graft inwardly in thine heart. It is in the fifty-first Psalm. Take thy Bible and read, and mark the whole. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness ; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.—O LORD, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."

THE END.

14

THE CLAIMS
OF THE
HOLY WEEK:
A PLAIN
ADDRESS TO CHURCHMEN.

"Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

BRETHREN,

LENT is drawing to a close, and if we have kept it in the spirit of the Church, we are prepared for the solemnities of the week with which it ends. If we have really done, as in our earnest supplications on Ash Wednesday we professed to do—if we have turned to the Lord with "weeping, fasting, and praying," we shall hallow the return of the season, when that redemption was accomplished, which alone gives efficacy to our tears, our fasts, or our prayers. How, then, do we propose to spend the Passion week? If as in times past, many of us will do well, for this week has never gone by without edification in the Church. But we can all do better: and this year there are so many reasons why we *should* do better, there are so many considerations in the state of things around us, appealing to our consistency as the disciples of Christ, and our duty as the members of His Church, that in the frequency of our devotions, in the earnestness of our intercessions, in the vigor of our faith, and in the abundance of our good works, it ought to be a great week in Israel.

Let us recollect, for a moment, the claims which the Passion week has upon the devotion of Churchmen. I ought rather to say, of all who profess the faith of Christ crucified, for it seems strange that any who place their hopes of salvation on the cross,



should fail to observe this anniversary of the week of Redemption.

It is, then, no common week. If there be any thing in antiquity and universal custom, if there be any reason in attaching a relative sanctity to times and seasons, (and when has reason not dictated it?) if there be any thing in the principles of association which lead men to commemorations of great events, any thing in the example of the wise and good, then the return of the week of the Redeemer's sufferings, is not a common week. It is a Holy Week. Why should we hesitate to think it so, when we may regard it as consecrated in the first instance by God himself? Our passion week had its origin in the Paschal week of the old dispensation. In the one, the Jew looked forward to the atonement, symbolized in his Passover lamb, to be revealed in the fullness of time; in the other, the Christian looks back upon the stupendous mystery as finished—the real subject of the week, with both Jew and Christian, being the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Thus, for nearly fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, there was a Holy Week in the Church of God. Year after year, the Jewish nation gathered around the temple to be nearer the great altar of their faith—they rehearsed the psalms of their redemption from Egypt—the paschal lamb was slain—the mystical supper was eaten—the days of unleavened bread were hallowed, and Israel returned to their dwellings sanctified anew. So it was from century to century. At length the Great Week arrived. The types and symbols disappeared in the awful event they had prefigured. The true PASCHAL LAMB was slain. The whole body of the Church was sanctified by that offering once made for all. And then did the week *cease* to be holy? Then did that period, the most momentous in all the lapse of ages, when mysteries were enacted on earth, at which all Heaven was looking down in amazement, cease to be had in remembrance by the Church? If, for fifteen hundred years, it had been dear to the faithful as the shadow

of good things to come, a week of pious expectation, was it no longer dear to them as a week commemorative of the great fulfilment? We cannot believe it. It is not in the nature of things. The first Christians, as the week came round, could not fail to observe it. Bringing with it so many recollections of the most affecting nature, it would command their religious veneration. History tells us that such was the case. St. Paul seems to refer to it, at least to the festival of Easter, with which it concludes, when he says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." The earliest ecclesiastical historians speak of the Paschal Week among Christians, and in the third and fourth centuries, we find it among the established institutions of the Church.* It was called the Paschal Week—the Great Week—the Holy Week. From that day until now we know the observance has prevailed in all the countries of Christendom. If, then, there is any thing in religious antiquity to attach sacredness to a season, surely the week of the Passion has become sacred. Considered as a continuation of the Passover week—for what else was its commencement?—it is a religious institution three thousand four hundred years old, and the most ancient extant next to the Sabbath.

Is there any thing in universal practice to enhance the claims of an institution upon our regard? Here we have the practice of the "Holy Church throughout all the world." Besides the Greek and Roman Churches, there are all the Protestants of Europe who are unanimous in the observance. The Lutherans and Calvinists, the Reformed Churches of Holland, the United Brethren, indeed, all on the continent, without exception, retain the week in their calendar as religiously as the Roman Catholics.†

* During the first three centuries, the paschal week of the Christians was kept at the same time with that of the Jews. By the canon of the Council of Nice, universally followed in Christendom, they do not now always fall together, but coincide sufficiently to make our passion week an anniversary of the original week.

† The Lutherans in particular celebrate the week, or the latter part of it, with great solemnities. In Germany, their churches are hung

The only exceptions are the Presbyterians of Scotland, some of the dissenters in England, and the Calvinistic denominations in our own country. To disregard the Holy Week, then, is to be singular in Christendom. It is to be peculiar, not Catholic. It is to violate ancient and universal associations. It is to throw aside an aid to piety which has been cherished by the wisest and holiest of the human race.

The last consideration is, indeed, the great reason for the ordinance. It is an aid to piety, and so, Brethren, let us use it. The Church has consecrated the week, let us consecrate it in our hearts. Let no one say, it is a formal observance, a mere outward ceremony; if it be so to any one, it is because he makes it so. If there *can* be a spiritual observance, it is one which calls us off from the world, and gathers us around the cross of Jesus Christ. There let our thoughts now be gathered. Now let there be a truce to the distractions of the world. Now let us know what it is to live chiefly in the bosom of our families, with the poor and the afflicted, in the closet, and in the house of God. We read. We pray. We follow the Redeemer in the mazes of his sufferings. We commune with our hearts, and are still. We instruct our families—we speak to them of the treachery of Judas, of the denial of Peter, of the weakness of Pilate—of the SAVIOUR, anointed by Mary, appointing the Eucharist—praying in the garden—standing mute before Pilate; and so, day after day, of the wondrous incidents in the deep tragedy of the week. But ah! you say, we are not ministers—we are men of business—we have not leisure for this. Not leisure generally—but, surely, leisure for holy things in the Holy Week. O, say not that in the course of the whole year, the theme of religion cannot be prominent for a few days in succession. Give not up yourselves so entirely to the pursuits of life. Be glad that a week comes in to check your worldly ardor. While the Church is showing you the Man of sorrows, in the

in black—as was formerly the case in this country. In some places, the whole congregation would appear dressed in black on Good Friday.

midst of his grief, must you needs have your wonted occupation or entertainment? While she bids you listen to him pouring out his soul in prayer, in that lengthened intercession which preceded his suffering have you no time to listen—as if, indeed, your portion were in that world for which he *then* prayed not? While she calls you to see him drink the bitter cup of his agony, must you quaff your cup of joy? While you see him sold for thirty pieces of silver, have you not a moment's fear, lest in the pursuit of gain, you also should betray Him? And on the very day of the crucifixion, because the multitude are above the superstition of paying it any respect, must you, too, be buying and selling and getting gain? Must the counting-room find you at the desk, or the store be kept open, lest your neighbours, whose consciences are not bound by the Church, should have a day's advantage over you in trade? What is that religion worth which never makes a sacrifice of temporal profits?—which leaves a man free for every chance of gain that is open to the world?

But you can be good enough to attend religious services extraordinary, provided they are held at night: and certainly that is better than not attending such services at all—but why not the services of the morning? * Why should our Church congregations during this week, be made up almost wholly of females? If mothers can leave their families, fathers can leave their merchandize. Do not begrudge Religion a few week-day hours. Do not reckon them lost because they are spent at church. Do not wait until every thing else is done, and you are tired out with the secular duties of the day, before you are ready to worship God, for then you will not be satisfied with the calm services of the Church; you will be too care-worn to be interested by prayers and Holy Scriptures which you have so often heard, and you must have something new and exciting to keep you

* Of course, it is not meant to object to Divine service at night while so many from their condition in life, can attend church at no other time.

awake. On the other hand, if you can steal away from your business for an hour while your spirits are fresh, and compose yourself to unite in the daily service and listen to those affecting narratives of the Passion, which the Church day after day rehearses to us, you will derive a benefit you did not expect; you will find it very wholesome to retire a while from the bustle of life; you will learn meditation; you will be disciplined to pray tranquilly as well as fervently; you will understand what it is to contemplate Jesus Christ, simply as he is held forth in the pages of the Gospel, full of grace and truth.

Thus let us hallow the Holy Week. Why should it not be the holiest week yet in our lives? When shall we bear the cross of Christ in earnest, if not when we see him toiling with it up Mount Calvary? When shall we renounce the world, if not when we see it crucifying the Lord of Glory? When shall we press forward with fresh zeal towards the mark of the prize of our high calling? When shall there be a renewal of our faith, if not when contemplating the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the precious death and burial, which were the price of our salvation?

Candidates for holy orders, let this be a holy week to you. If used aright, it may be a great means of grace. Now be the Cross your books of theology. Now look at the Master you are preparing to serve—and while you see Him in the depths of his humiliation—while you see Him washing his disciples' feet—while you see Him reviled but not reviling again—struck upon the face and only answering, "why smitest thou me?"—*then, then* determine whether you are in earnest in desiring to enter upon His service. With a *crucified* Master before your eyes, ask yourselves what you really mean, when you say you will follow Him. The Passion week shows the ministry of Jesus Christ in a light that we are afraid to see it in, but a light, my young brethren, in which it is good for you to look at it, that you may correct the false coloring reflected on it from the world. **It is**

a very pleasant thing to be a minister in the comfortable parish that you have pictured to yourself, and which *may* be the scene of your labors. But set not your heart upon it—learn to recognize your Lord, with his countenance of grief and his crown of thorns. He may love you so well—he may intend you for so high a seat in his kingdom—that you may have to drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. Go, then, watch and pray. At Calvary, learn whether God has called you to his service. At the foot of the cross kneel down; wait there in silence for the anointing from above, which must fit you for your work.

And we, brethren, (if the plainness of this address may be continued, it may already have passed the bounds of modesty,) we who minister in holy things, may prove the virtue of religious retirement. Our duties keep us much abroad. We receive and return the hospitalities of our flocks, and we mingle more in promiscuous company than we desire, that men may not think us gloomy and severe. But this week society will yield its claims, and we may make our time our own. When we rehearse the history of the passion, it may be after pondering it ourselves. We may go to our churches from our closets. Our meditations may be in Gethsemane as well as our sermons. We may supplicate at the altar after litanies at home. Now when our ministrations seem to clothe us with robes of deeper sanctity, the world may recognize in us the ministers of Jesus Christ: devout and self-denying men, really indifferent to the pomps and vanities which we professionally renounce, “watching unto prayer—our loins girt, and our lamps burning, and ourselves like servants waiting for their Lord.”

We are apt to talk of our likeness to the primitive Church. In the approaching week, then, let us endeavor, with God's grace, to give it something of a practical reality. If we enter into the true spirit of the observance, our relation to the world will, in some slight degree, resemble that of the early disciples; for the world knows not a holy week. Its business and

amusements, its plans and speculations, keep on their wonted course, and it would as soon think of suspending or moderating them, for the sake of contemplating the passion, as the heathen world of old would, of worshipping the crucified. And *we* must keep on *our* way, not in ostentation, but for protection. While they assemble in the mart, the courts, the exchange, we leave them (if only for a sacred hour or two) and take our silent way to the sanctuary. While they repair to the places of entertainment, we gather the church in our households, and "sing a hymn to Christ as to God." While they live on the news of the day, we search the Scriptures and converse with the holy men of old. While they prolong their mirth through the night, we keep our vigils of prayer. While they banquet, we fast. While they spend for their pleasure, we give alms. While they court the rich, the fashionable, and the gay, we seek the abodes of the wretched, and the poor, we commune with Him who was despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Whatever be the dazzling scenes of life, still vivid before our eyes, and enshrined in the holy place of our hearts, be JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

O, could there be a Holy Week like this throughout our borders, the Church would be primitive indeed. There would be the revival of a spirit not to die with the week, but to live afresh in the feast of the resurrection, and abide in the body of the Church, well nigh glorified. Then Apostolic orders, ancient liturgies, and Catholic creeds, would have their living power. "Then should the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old—as in former years." Then would there be that manifestation of the Church, as the MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST, which devout souls are praying for, and which they think is beginning to appear. Be it so. Let us "exhort one another, brethren, and so much the more, as we see THE DAY approaching."

THE
EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR,
FURNISHED BY
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Part V.

And this is life eternal ; that they might know thee, the only true God ; and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.—*John xvii. 3.*

THE plan of God's mercy to mankind was one of those secrets of the divine government into which even the angels might desire to look. Intimations of its nature and extent were at sundry times, and in divers manners, as the Apostle says, conveyed to mankind by the prophets ; but it was not disclosed in all its important features, till it had been completed by the death of the REDEEMER. Even the Apostles, the constant friends and followers of CHRIST, did not fully understand the vastness of the divine mercy, nor the means by which it was to be conferred upon mankind, till the covenant of grace was sealed with the blood of the Mediator, and the promise of the Comforter fulfilled by the descent of the HOLY GHOST. How little appearance was exhibited by the SAVIOUR of the world during his abode upon earth, of that exalted nature which alone could impart an adequate worthiness to the sacrifice about to be offered by him for the sins of the whole world ! But this was the trial of men's faith. JESUS displayed sufficient proofs of his divine mission ; A Pharisee confessed, *we know that no man can do the things which thou doest, except God be with him.** It was therefore the part of reasonable men, and sincere lovers of truth, to commit themselves to his guidance ; and to wait patient-

* *John iii. 2.*



ly for a knowledge of the plan of redemption, till he should think fit to impart it. This is the line of conduct which the Apostles pursued ; and our LORD commended them for it, in that beautiful address to his heavenly FATHER, which is contained in the seventeenth chapter of St. John ; *I have manifested thy name to the men which thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Our SAVIOUR here declares that his Apostles were fully convinced of his being indeed the Messiah. This was the extent of their knowledge, and of their faith, at that period. They were to be endowed with a more perfect apprehension of the things concerning the Gospel covenant, upon receiving from on high the promised gift of the Spirit. In the mean time it was sufficient, for the purposes of proving their sincerity, and of securing their fidelity, if they were assured that JESUS was the CHRIST. Many things there were, relating to the great mystery of godliness, which they were not qualified to hear, till the season of their LORD's humiliation should be past. Our SAVIOUR, told them, *I have yet many things to say unto you ; but ye cannot bear them now.** But after his resurrection, during the forty days which he spent in the company of his disciples, he *spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ;†* that is relating to the Christian dispensation.

In his character of Messiah as sent by the FATHER into the world, he offered up a prayer at the same time for his own glorification, and for the perseverance and final recompense of the Apostles ; FATHER, *the hour is come ; glorify thy SON, that thy SON also may glorify thee.‡* Our SAVIOUR, in his human nature, prays to the FATHER for the instruction and comfort of his disciples, in words, which at once express humiliation as the SON of MAN, and his participation in the divine glory. The effect for which he prayed was to be reciprocal ; *glorify thy SON, that thy SON also may glorify thee.* This is not the language of a creature to his Creator.—*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they might know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.*

By those who deny the divinity of CHRIST, this passage has always been considered one of their strong-holds. We are desired to “ observe, that there is but one true GOD, and that JESUS CHRIST is expressively excluded from being that true GOD, and contradistinguished from him as his messenger.”

That there is but one true GOD, we admit, and assert, as fully and unequivocally as these interpreters themselves : that there is any thing in this, or any other text of Scripture, which expressively ex-

* John xvi. 12.

† Acts i. 3.

‡ John xvii. 1.

cludes JESUS CHRIST from being that true GOD, we deny. There is no *contradistinction* in this passage between GOD, and CHRIST; but between the one true GOD, and the false gods of the Heathens; this is apparent from the use of the epithet *true*, which has no force at all, as a mark of contradistinction, except as opposed to false. It is here applied, as it is by St. Paul, *and how ye turned from IDOLS to serve the living and TRUE GOD.**

So far are our SAVIOUR's words from containing a plain contradistinction between GOD and CHRIST, as to their nature, that the knowledge of CHRIST is put upon a level with the knowledge of GOD. The only distinction, which really is made, is between the FATHER, who *sent his only-begotten SON into the world*, and the SON, in his character of Messiah, who was so sent. The true meaning of the passage, both as to the knowledge of which it speaks, and the objects of that knowledge, is illustrated by the following words of St. John, in the conclusion of his first Epistle; *And we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true; even in his SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS is the true GOD and eternal life.* In which passage it is evident that the epithet TRUE, means 'true GOD:' *we are in him that is the true GOD, even in his SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS is the true GOD, &c.*

The words in the text may therefore be understood as follows: "And this is life eternal; to know the true GOD, as he has revealed himself in and by CHRIST; and to know CHRIST, as he has declared himself united with and sent by the FATHER." It is not life eternal to know and recognize GOD as the creator and governor of the universe; for such a knowledge was possessed by the Jews before the Gospel dispensation; nay, by the evil angels themselves; but to know him, as planning and accomplishing the scheme of man's redemption, by the ministry and death of his SON; and to recognize the SON as the author and finisher of salvation, that indeed is life eternal.

The same tenour of language is observable throughout the whole of our SAVIOUR's most solemn and affecting prayer. He declares with a tone of conscious satisfaction, which would ill accord with the deficiencies of a sinful man, *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* Our LORD himself had said to his disciples; *when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.†* But what is his own language? *And now, O FATHER, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I AM GLORIFIED in them.‡*

The intimate connexion and conjunction of the SON with the FATHER is strongly expressed in our SAVIOUR's prayer for the Apostles: *Holy FATHER, keep through thine own name§ those whom*

* 1 Thess. i. 9.

† Luke xvii. 10.

‡ John xvii. 4, 5, 10.

§ Rather in *thine own name*; i. e. in the profession of the true religion.

*thou hast given me, that they may be one, AS WE ARE;** which expression implies, at least such a community of counsel and will with GOD, as no being, merely human, could have asserted. Again, our LORD prays, that the FATHER will sanctify the Apostles through his truth;† but of himself he says, *For their sakes I sanctify MYSELF; that they also might be sanctified through the truth.‡*

Again; *that they all may be one; as thou, FATHER, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* The intimate love and union, subsisting between the FATHER and the SON, is the model of that love which ought to subsist between Christians, as far as the difference of their natures will permit. But surely no *man* could pretend to the same reciprocity of feeling and will, between GOD and himself, which connects man with man; no human prophet, nor inspired teacher would presume to couple his own name with that of the Deity in such a phrase as this; *Let my disciples be in us!*

Our SAVIOUR prays that this union between his disciples may be perfected, in order that the world might see the love of GOD towards them, in its effects, as clearly as they had seen it displayed towards the REDEEMER himself, in the communication of miraculous power, *that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me,§* i. e. that mankind at large may be assured, from the blessed effects of that unanimity with which they shall be inspired, that the author of that religion which produces those effects, has indeed been sent by thee; and that thou lovest these my disciples, not indeed in the same degree, but as evidently as thou hast loved me.

What follows in the 24th verse is still more remarkable: FATHER, *I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* How noble and striking an assertion of his own pre-existence and exalted nature! Our SAVIOUR desires that his disciples may in due time be with him, in the place whither he was then going; that they might behold not only his FATHER's glory, but his own; his own glory as the divine Word. Here again St. John's Epistle illustrates his Gospel; *Beloved, now are we the SONS of GOD; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when HE shall appear, we shall be like him; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.*

I am not called upon, by the nature of my subject, to consider at length the concluding scenes of our SAVIOUR's ministry. After his resurrection, when he appeared to Mary Magdalene, he used these remarkable words,—*Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my FATHER and your FATHER, and unto my GOD and your GOD.||* Although I would not lay any great stress upon this mode of expression, in this particular instance; yet when we take into con-

* John xvii. 11

† John xvii. 17.

‡ John xvii. 19

§ John xvii. 23

|| John xx. 17.

sideration the manner in which our SAVIOUR usually spoke of God as his FATHER and as the FATHER of his disciples, but under the common term of *our FATHER*; this disjunctive description appears to be deserving of remark.* The Evangelist has recorded a more striking testimony to the divinity of our LORD, in the confession of a doubting apostle: *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my GOD.*† This appears to be an unequivocal confession of our SAVIOUR's divine nature. The Unitarians say that it is only an exclamation of surprise; 'My LORD and my GOD, how great is thy power!' It is quite certain that the words 'my LORD' refer to our SAVIOUR; and in an exclamation, like that of Thomas, which was occasioned by the joyful certainty of his master's resurrection, we can hardly separate the two members of the sentence, and apply one to CHRIST, and the other to God. Had St. John so understood it, he would have taken care to record it in such a manner (supposing him to have entertained the same notions with the Unitarians) as not to give it the *semblance* of a direct acknowledgment of CHRIST's divine nature. He would have told us, that Thomas said, My LORD! and shortly afterwards, My GOD! or something to that effect. But a fatal objection to the Unitarian interpretation is this; St. John says expressly, that this exclamation was addressed to JESUS; *Thomas answered and SAID UNTO HIM.* Besides which, our SAVIOUR commended it as a confession of faith; which would not have been had it expressed only surprise. This passage is the more deserving of our attention, because it is the first time that CHRIST is called God by any of his disciples.

After having related this incident, the Evangelist declares the object and intent of his Gospel; *these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD; and that believing, ye might have life through his name.*

We have now considered the manner in which St. John has executed his purpose. He commences his work with a full, precise, and positive declaration of the eternal pre-existence and divine nature of the Word; of his agency in the work of creation; of his incarnation and residence amongst men. He then details, in succession, those discourses of our SAVIOUR, in which, while there is a constant reference to his office of a divine legate, there are also frequent and striking allusions to his participation in the divine nature. Not one of these allusions is explained away by St. John; there is not a word, which can be construed into an assertion of our SAVIOUR's simple humanity; but there are many passages, which plainly imply his divinity; and which cannot be otherwise explained, without doing violence to the natural propriety of language, and to the most unquestionable rules of interpretation

* See Part IV. p. I.

† John xx. 27.

The intention of the Evangelist displays itself in every page of his Gospel. It was, to exhibit JESUS, as the true Messiah; the restorer of the human race, not by his doctrines only, but by his death; as the SON of GOD, existent from eternity, with the FATHER; having all things that the FATHER hath; and doing all things which the FATHER doeth; and to be honoured by all men, even as they honour the FATHER. All these points St. John in the first instance briefly, but pointedly asserts; and afterwards proves them at large, by the words of JESUS himself. And in conclusion he tells us that his object was, not to record all the wonderful things which JESUS did, but only such particulars as might convince mankind that he was the SON of GOD; not merely a prophet, (for that he was proved to be by his miracles, which the other Evangelists had related,) but the very SON of the MOST HIGH, which he repeatedly declared himself to be, in the discourses preserved by St. John. I will conclude with a brief recapitulation of the principal doctrines which are taught in this remarkable Gospel.

So GOD loved the world, that he *gave* (*i. e.* to death) his only-begotten SON, that men might be saved by their belief in him *as such*. JESUS CHRIST was this only-begotten SON; the SON of GOD, in a manner, and by a mode of generation, peculiar to himself. He had GOD for *his own* FATHER, and was equal to him;* existing with him before he appeared in the flesh; and sent by him upon earth.† He had dwelt with his FATHER in glory, before the world was; he had came from that glory, and returned to it.‡ He was exactly equal, in attributes and powers, to the FATHER, and is to be worshipped as the FATHER. The FATHER and the SON have a perfect unity of counsel, will and operation. And there is the same unity subsisting between the HOLY SPIRIT and the FATHER, and between the HOLY SPIRIT and the SON.§

We are further taught, that CHRIST came upon earth to save mankind, by dying for them upon the cross: and that he was the Messiah sent from GOD, who had been promised to the holy men of old; and spoken of by Moses and the prophets: that he did nothing without the direction and consent of the FATHER; and taught nothing but what he had heard, not by divine inspiration, like the prophets, but by intimate communication with the FATHER in heaven: that he laid down his life, by the command of his FATHER: and yet that he had power of himself to lay it down, and to take it again:|| that the same credence is to be given to the SON, as to the FATHER: that it is the SON who has the power of conferring eternal life upon believers,¶ and that he is to be the judge of mankind.

* John v. 18.

† John iii. 13. 17.

‡ John vi. 38, 62; viii. 42; xvi. 28; xvii. 5

§ John v. 17, 19, 23, 26; x. 30; xv. 13, 15, &c.

|| John iii. 14, 15; v. 19; viii. 38; x. 17, 18.

¶ John vi. 40. xvii. 2.

These are the leading points of that faith, which is described in the Gospel of St. John, as being necessary to salvation; to illustrate and establish it was the object of his writing. Some of the ancient hereticks, at a very early period, finding it impossible to evade the force of that testimony, which this Gospel affords, to the divinity of CHRIST, rejected it altogether, as containing erroneous doctrines. This is a striking evidence of the impression which it is calculated to produce upon the mind; and the very fact, of its being calculated to produce such an impression, affords a strong argument in behalf of our interpretation; since it is highly improbable, that at a time, when the church had begun to be distracted by heresies concerning the nature of CHRIST, an Apostle should have employed expressions, which to all appearance assert the divinity of our SAVIOUR, if he had known that doctrine to be unfounded.

The great and sublime truths which this Evangelist proclaimed in his Gospel, he reiterated in his Epistles. He there describes CHRIST as the Word of life; the SON of GOD, and eternal life; as cleansing us by his blood from all sin; as having laid down his life for us; as having *come in the flesh*; as *sent by the FATHER to be the SAVIOUR of the world*; and as *born of GOD*; as *advocate with the FATHER, and the propitiation for our sins*. He warns us, and it is indeed an awful warning, *that whosoever denieth the SON, the same hath not the FATHER*.* And he concludes with those words, which, if I have succeeded in explaining his views, you will now without hesitation adopt, in their literal and unqualified sense: *we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true; even in his SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE.*

* 1 John ii 2, 7; ii. 1, 23; iii. 16; iv. 3, 14; v. 1.

CURIOUS speculations upon the Trinity profit not. There is a sort of knowledge in this, as in other things, which betrays its own falsehood by puffing up the soul. Much time hath been lost, and many hurtful disputes have been raised, concerning the mode of the SON's generation from the FATHER, and the manner of the SPIRIT's procession from both; points which have not been revealed and which, therefore, are not necessary to faith. It is sufficient for us to apprehend, that there are Three Equal Persons in one JEHOVAH, or self-existent GODHEAD, and that this GODHEAD is ONE; that we are privileged to have communion with these Divine

Persons in their several offices of salvation ; and that by the unction of the SPIRIT, we come into the grace of the SON, and possess the love of the Father now and for evermore. "Through CHRIST," says the Apostle, "we both," that is Jews and Gentiles, "have an access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER." And thus, "the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST," are with all true believers in every age of the world. He, therefore, that doth not thus apprehend the doctrine of the Trinity, only apprehendeth the phantom of his own imagination, and is never the better for his speculation, be it ever so abstruse or refined.

Of what avail to my soul are all the nicest disquisitions of men ? I want food and light, reality and enjoyment. These do Thy word, O LORD, afford in plentiful measure, when thy grace opens the well-spring to my heart. I am there taught to pray for that anointing of the Holy One, which shall lead and guide me into all thy saving truth. By Him, I am both instructed and enabled to renounce myself; to put on CHRIST, and to cleave to my Redeemer as my only portion and hope. By the SPIRIT and SON of GOD, I am led up to fellowship with the FATHER, and to call upon him as my Father, even *mine*. O my blessed God, my Abba, my Father, my Life, and my All, what hast Thou revealed to my poor soul ; and how much more hast Thou done and prepared than Thou hast hitherto revealed to men, or than men in this state are able to conceive ! O Thou Fountain of unutterable blessedness, thou unfathomable Height and Depth of love, help me thus to know Thee in the secret of my soul ; and may all Thy works of providence and grace increase this inward knowledge to the end ! While others dispute, let me enjoy. Manifest Thy precepts to my mind, and say to my longing spirit, "Peace be unto thee, for I am thy salvation."

One spark of this life is of more worth than the whole universe of notions ; for this not only brings an understanding of divine things superior to all speculations, but gives with it a fulness of satisfaction, arising from the very taste and perception of the things themselves. Faith takes them for realities, hope is enkindled by them as such, and love finds them to be so, and embraces them with joy to the end.—A. *Sale*.

THE
EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR,
FURNISHED BY
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Part IV.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am.—*John* viii. 58.

WE have already considered those expressions in the six first chapters of this Gospel, which bear most strongly upon the point of our SAVIOUR'S divinity. Before we proceed to examine the following chapters, let us take notice of the manner in which our LORD on all occasions spoke of GOD as *the* FATHER, in contradistinction to himself, as *the* SON; and of the still more peculiar expression of *my* FATHER, which he used without any qualification or definition; whereas in addressing his disciples, he spoke of GOD, as of *their* heavenly FATHER—their FATHER in heaven. "CHRIST has directed us to say, *our* FATHER; a form of speech which he never used himself; sometimes he calls him *the* FATHER, sometimes *my* FATHER, sometimes *your*, but never *our*: he makes no such conjunction of us to himself, as to make no distinction between us and himself.*

Towards the conclusion of the eighth chapter, our SAVIOUR tells the Jews; *your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad*: he rejoiced in the promise, that *in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed*: he understood it to refer to a future Redeemer; and he exulted in the prospect. *The Scripture*, says St. Paul, *foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all*

* Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. I. from Augustin.



*nations be blessed.** The faith which the same Apostle attributes to the patriarchs and holy men of old, was a faith in the promised Redeemer. But the Jews understood JESUS to say, that Abraham had seen him alive; upon which they asked, with a natural incredulity, *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Our SAVIOUR answers them according to their own sense of his words, in the affirmative. From their misapprehension he takes occasion to place his superiority to Abraham in a fresh point of view; and tells the Jews, that although as a man, he was by many ages younger than that patriarch, yet that he existed before him. This was, in fact, declaring himself to be the Messiah; whose pre-existence, as I stated before, was a received notion amongst the Jews.

What do the Unitarians say to this? They insert a word in the text, "Before Abraham was born, I am *he*," and then explain it thus; "My mission was settled and certain before the birth of Abraham." But what is the force of *he*? It is equivalent, they say, to "the CHRIST;" as in the 24th and 28th verses of the same chapter, where it is inserted in our received version. And this perhaps may be true; but unless the assertion had implied an actual pre-existence, it would have been no answer to the question proposed to our SAVIOUR, but an unmeaning evasion of it. That it *was* intended to assert his pre-existence, we infer from the fact, that he made no attempt to undeceive the Jews, who understood it in that sense. Enraged at the presumptuousness of such a declaration, they no longer set any bounds to their anger, but *took up stones and cast at him*.

If it be asked, why should that assertion of Messiahship, upon the part of our SAVIOUR, have excited in the breasts of the Jews such a transport of rage?—we reply, because they expected their Messiah to be a divine person, the SON of GOD; and therefore considered it nothing short of blasphemy, for an obscure and mean individual, such as JESUS appeared to be, to lay claim to that character. So in the tenth chapter, ver. 30, when our LORD declared, in the plainest and most direct terms, his intimate union with GOD, *I and my FATHER are one*, the Jews understood him, as every common reader or hearer must, in the obvious sense of the words; and *they took up stones again to stone him*: and when he inquired for which of his good works they treated him so; they answered him, *For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man, makest thyself GOD*. Upon that occasion, our SAVIOUR, not condescending to enter into an explanation of that sublime feature of the Gospel to prejudiced and obstinate men, shows them that, upon the authority of their own Scriptures, he might with propriety be called the SON of GOD, as having received an authority from GOD far superior to that which was entrusted to magistrates and kings under the old covenant, and yet

* Gal. iii. 8.

even they were called gods: JESUS answered them, *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken (i. e. cannot be called in question,) say ye of him, whom the FATHER hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the SON of GOD?* Our SAVIOUR'S argument then is this: Scripture gives the appellation of gods to those, who are ordained of GOD to exercise earthly dominion: how much more am I entitled to the appellation of SON of GOD, who have received of the SPIRIT without measure, and am sent into the world to establish a spiritual kingdom? He argues upon the received principles of the Jews themselves, and shows that, even according to them, he is not guilty of blasphemy: the higher grounds of justification he leaves untouched.

The blasphemy, which the Jews imputed to our LORD, consisted in his assuming the title of the SON of GOD, which they considered to belong exclusively to their Messiah. It is to be remarked, that to his disciples, and to the woman of Samaria, he avowed himself the CHRIST; to the Scribes and Pharisees he spoke of himself under the appellation of the SON of GOD. Now the assumption of the Messiahship was not blasphemy, unless it was considered to be the assumption of a divine character; and that it was so considered by the Jews, appears from St. Mark's account; *Again the High Priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the CHRIST (or Messiah) the SON of the blessed? And JESUS said, I am: and ye shall see the SON of MAN sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the High Priest rent his clothes, and said, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the BLASPHEMY; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.**

From a comparison of these passages, it is plain that the Jews applied to the Messiah the title of the SON of GOD, in a sense which implied some sort of participation in the divine nature; that JESUS adopted the appellation, and applied it to himself, in a manner which asserted that participation; and that, in consequence, the Jews accused him of blasphemy. They knew the birth, parentage, and condition of the man JESUS; whereas they expected that the Messiah would make his first appearance upon earth in Bethlehem; but that no man would know his origin. This appears from St. John's description of the hesitation expressed by the people, when they heard JESUS speaking boldly in the temple; *Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very CHRIST? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when CHRIST cometh, no man knoweth whence he is?†*—While others said, *shall CHRIST come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, that CHRIST cometh out of the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?‡*

* Mark xiv. 61.

† John vii. 26.

‡ Perhaps there were two parties, entertaining these two opinions; one that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem; the other, that he was to appear suddenly amongst them, no man knowing whence.

Upon the whole it is apparent that the Jews entertained very high and magnificent, though perhaps somewhat indefinite notions, of the dignity of their expected Messiah; and our SAVIOUR, far from insinuating that those notions were unfounded, spoke of himself to the learned Jews, under the most exalted of all the titles which they applied to the Messiah; and in language, which implied an intimate and unparalleled union of himself with the FATHER in counsel, power, and will.

Nevertheless, during the period of his ministry *he was found in fashion as a man*,* and humbled himself, in that character, before the majesty of the FATHER. When certain Greeks,† who came up to Jerusalem, to worship at the feast, had demanded to see JESUS, and, as it seems probable, had been introduced to him by Andrew and Philip,‡ JESUS spoke of himself as the SON of MAN: *The hour is come, that the SON of MAN should be glorified.* The SON of GOD, as such, was incapable of further glorification: but having taken upon him our flesh, the hour was at hand, when he was to suffer death upon the cross; to rise from the grave; to ascend into heaven; and to sit on the right hand of the FATHER in glory: in the glory which he had with him before the world was.§ But the first step in this ascent to glory was painful to that nature, which the divine Word had taken upon himself; and his voluntary submission to it was that great act of obedience, which was so meritorious in the sight of GOD, and which remedied the evil effects of man's disobedience. Now there would have been no extraordinary merit in *obeying* that ordinance of the divine wisdom, which required the sacrifice of his life, unless he had the power of *disobeying*; that is, unless he had been equal in authority with the FATHER.

Our SAVIOUR's power, as a divine Being, rendered his submission, as a man, to the penalty of death, inexpressibly worthy. So argues the Apostle to the Hebrews: *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*|| But the nature, which he had condescended to take upon him, he took with all its feelings and infirmities; and therefore he was not insensible to the severity of the trials which awaited him. The dignity of his superior nature is thus perfectly reconcilable with the humility which displayed itself, when the SON of MAN thus addressed himself to GOD; *Now is my soul troubled? and what shall I say? FATHER, save me, from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*¶—My mind is troubled at the approach of a vio

* Phil. ii. 8.

† i. e. Greek proselytes, or converts to the Jewish religion.

‡ John xii. 20.

§ John xvii. 5

|| Heb. v. 7.

¶ John xii. 27.

lent death. What then shall I say? shall this be my prayer, **FATHER**, save me from this hour?—Yet I know, that to undergo this season of trial and trouble was the very object of my coming.—Compare this with what took place at Gethsemane, on the eve of his crucifixion. Our SAVIOUR in that trying moment said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.—O my FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.** From these incidents we may take occasion to remark, once for all, that our blessed LORD, in speaking of himself to the Jews, in the character of the Messiah, asserted the dignity of his nature, and his right to the most exalted of those titles, which they applied to their expected Redeemer, the very SON of GOD; but in the company of his disciples, when referring to the humiliation which he was about to undergo, for the purpose of accomplishing the salvation of mankind, and in the presence of the people, to whom he was desirous of exhibiting an example of piety, and submission, and trust in GOD; and of marking his sense of the superintending providence of his heavenly FATHER over the good; he spoke of himself as the SON of MAN, and had recourse to audible and fervent prayer. With this impression, as to the motives which influenced our SAVIOUR, in his discourses with these different kinds of men, we shall find no difficulty in the words which he addressed to his disciples, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the FATHER: for my FATHER is greater than I.†*

In the thirteenth chapter of St. John, we have these words: *JESUS knowing that the FATHER had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from GOD, and went to GOD—riseth from supper—and began to wash the disciples' feet.‡* It is evident, that the Evangelist intended to contrast the humility of the action with the dignity and authority of the person who performed it. Our LORD said to his disciples after his resurrection, *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.§* where the words, *in heaven*, prove that this power is not to be understood merely of the influence which his religion was to exercise over the hearts of men, but of an actual and positive dominion over the universe.—*That he was come from GOD, and went or was going to GOD.* Now as he was going to ascend personally into heaven, so his coming from heaven must be understood of a personal descent from the abode of the divine Majesty, where he “was with GOD in he beginning.” The circumstance itself, of our SAVIOUR’s having performed for his disciples one of the meanest offices of a servant, is a practical lesson of that condescension and kindness, which Christians are bound to exercise towards one another; and a signal illustration of that emphatic description given by St. Paul; *Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS; who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD; but made himself of no reputation,|| and took upon him the form of a servant.¶*

* Matt. xxvi. 38. † John xiv. 28. ‡ John xiii. 3, 4, 5. § Matt. xxviii. 18.

|| Literally, “emptied himself,” i. e. of his glory. ¶ Phil. ii. 5. “A slave.

Towards the conclusion of his ministry our LORD spoke more plainly to his disciples of his approaching sufferings and death; and his discourses took a more affectionate and consolatory tone; *Let not your heart be troubled; Ye believe in GOD, believe also in me.** Here again we may ask, could such a mode of speech have been used, without presumption, by a mere man? Still more applicable is this question to what follows, *He that hath seen me hath seen the FATHER:†* which words infer at least a parity and perfect agreement with the FATHER, such as no man could lay claim to. Again, *Believe me that I am in the FATHER, and the FATHER in me.‡* In the 13th verse our SAVIOUR says, *whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON.* Here is a plain declaration, that whatsoever degree of power the Apostles might require, and pray for, as his disciples, he himself would grant it; and that, for a particular purpose, that GOD the FATHER might be glorified by the establishment of a religion, the foundation of which was to be a belief in GOD the SON. The FATHER and the SON are here spoken of in terms of perfect similarity, as to nature and quality; and let us here again inquire, could a mere human prophet have made such a promise as this, that he would himself grant the prayer of his followers?

In the 16th verse of this chapter, our SAVIOUR gives to his Apostles the promise of a Comforter, who should supply the place of their Master, guide, and friend, now about to be taken from them into glory. *I will pray the FATHER, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.* After his resurrection from the dead, and previous to his ascension, our LORD breathed on the Apostles, and said, *Receive ye the HOLY GHOST; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.§* From these words it appears, that the HOLY GHOST was at that time conferred upon the Apostles, as far as the spiritual authority of their office was concerned; although the actual descent of the Spirit did not take place until the feast of Pentecost. And we may remark, that when our LORD said to the Apostles, *Receive ye the HOLY GHOST,* he took upon himself to do, by his own authority, that which he had told them he would pray the FATHER to do. As the man JESUS, in which character he was then best known to his disciples, he had said to them, *I will pray the FATHER, and he shall give you another Comforter:* as the LORD of life, triumphant over the spiritual enemies of mankind, he spoke with the authority of the SON of GOD, *Receive ye the HOLY GHOST:* so true was his assertion, *All things that the FATHER hath, are mine||* You will observe also, that, as at one time the Comforter is described as coming from the FATHER, while at another time our SAVIOUR said, *I will send the promise of my FATHER upon you;* it follows, that the HOLY SPIRIT proceeds from the SON, as well as from the FATHER

* John xiv. 1. † John xiv. 9 ‡ John xiv. 11. § John xx. 22. || John xvi. 15.

a truth which CHRIST most emphatically declared, by coupling the words, *Receive ye the HOLY GHOST*, with that significant action of breathing upon the Apostles.

These doctrines, it may be said, are mysterious. How can they be otherwise, seeing that they relate to a nature different from and infinitely superior to our own? Let it not be supposed that we are attempting to give any explanation whatever of the *mode* of existence, by which the two natures were united in CHRIST. It is sufficient for us to know, that he is described in Scripture as the only-begotten SON, one with the FATHER; that he emptied himself of his glory took upon him the form of a servant; was made in the likeness of man; and that he was, to all intents and purposes, a man, during his sojourn upon earth. If all these points are separately and distinctly insisted upon in the word of God—as to any common apprehension they certainly are—it is not our part to devise schemes for avoiding the difficulties of revelation, with the vain hope of reducing all that is told us, of the nature and dispensations of GOD, to the level of our own understanding; but to take each truth separately, as we find it declared in Scripture, and to confess *that great is the mystery of godliness*.

Let us be contented with the knowledge which GOD has been pleased to impart to us of himself, and receive it such as he has revealed it, without presuming to apply the measure of our own comprehension, limited and imperfect as it is, to the communication of that HOLY SPIRIT, who is known to us only so far as he has seen fit to disclose himself in his Word. How just is the observation of St. Paul: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*. But they are not the less true because they surpass our natural understandings; the simple question being, with us, whether they be declared in the Word of GOD? For the rest, let us be content to wait, till we enter into that more pure and spiritual existence, where the twilight of this uncertain state shall give place to the clearness of the perfect day; and we shall be admitted to behold the ineffable brightness of the Divinity; the majesty of the FATHER; the glory of the only-begotten SON; and the pure effulgence of that HOLY SPIRIT; who now vouchsafes to us only a glimpse of the skirts of eternal light.

Not only the consideration of this mystery, but of all the Divine attributes, will in like manner extort from our feeble reason the question of Nicodemus, ‘How can these things be?’ They will all of them equally puzzle our shallow imagination, and baffle our slender understanding: for who can imagine, or understand, how

GOD's immensity doth consist with His perfect simplicity ; or that without any parts He doth co-exist to all possible extension of matter ; being all here, and wholly there, and immensely every where ? Who can apprehend His indivisible eternity, or how all successions of time are ever present to Him, and subject to His view ; so that He is not older now than He was when the world began, nor younger than He will be after innumerable ages are past ; so that he foreseeth the most contingent events, depending on causes in their nature arbitrary and indeterminate ? Who can fancy, how out of mere nothing, or out of extreme confusion and indisposedness, the world could be created, and framed into so goodly order, by a mere act of will, or the bare speaking of a word ? How without any distraction of thought He governeth affairs, attending to the infinite varieties of thoughts, words, and actions occurring here "so caring for all as if they were one individual, and so for each individual as if he were alone" as St. Austin speaketh ? How He is truly said to resolve and reverse, to love and to hate, to be pleased and grieved, all without any real change, or shadow of alteration ? How he suffereth many things to happen, which extremely displease Him, and which He can easily hinder ; and doth not effect many things which are much desired by Him, and very feasible to His power ? * * * Many such perfections and dispensations of God we must steadfastly believe, because they are plainly taught in Scripture ; to distrust them being to renounce Christianity ; to deny them being to raze the very foundation of our religion : yet he that shall with his utmost attention of mind endeavour to conceive how they can be, or how they consist together, according to our ordinary notions, and the vulgar meaning of words, applied by us to these inferior matters, shall find himself gruelled with innumerable semblances of contradictions, plunged in depths inscrutable, involved in labyrinths inextricable.

What in practice the cross of CHRIST was, "a stumbling block to the Jews" (men dull, but obstinate, and invincibly possessed by vain prejudices,) and "foolishness to the Greeks" (men of wit and subtilty, but overseemingly conceited of them,) that in speculation may a great part of divine truths be, apt to stumble froward and arrogant men : but as there, so here, "blessed are they who are not offended ;" whom no fond scruple or haughty conceit can pervert from readily embracing all necessary verities.

Barrow.

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THE
EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR,
FURNISHED BY
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Part III.

No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the SON of MAN, which is in heaven.—*John* iii. 13.

ONE of the most striking passages in St. John's Gospel is our SAVIOUR's conference with Nicodemus. He appears to have been a timid, but well meaning man, who was convinced that Jesus was a divinely commissioned teacher; and therefore came to him by night, for the purpose of proposing to him some questions concerning the Messiah's nature and office; a subject which then occupied the attention of the religious Jews. I am not about to dwell upon that conversation, except as far as it touches upon the great question which this tract is intended to illustrate; but I cannot avoid remarking, by the way, that our SAVIOUR's declaration of the necessity of an entire change in the state of man, to be wrought by the outward sign of water, and the inward operation of the Spirit, is so positive and general, that it seems very presumptuous and unsafe, to separate the two, and to question the necessity of either part of the regenerating process. A certain sect denies that the ordinance of baptism was intended to be perpetual. But our SAVIOUR's words contain no limitation; nor was the commission of baptism, which he gave to his Apostles, restricted by any definition of time. We are *at least* on the safe side, in retaining an expressive rite, appointed by our LORD, which his words appear positively to enjoin upon us, and which we know was considered to be indispensable not only by the Apostles, but by their successors through a great many ages.



Passing from this subject to that of our considerations, we have the very remarkable testimony of our LORD to his own nature and office, in the words, *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the SON of MAN which is in heaven.* As JESUS had not yet ascended up to heaven, we must understand this phrase to mean the perfect knowledge which he possessed of the counsels of his heavenly Father. But here the Unitarian turns round upon us, and says, If you interpret the phrase of *ascending up to heaven* in a figurative sense, so also must you interpret the expression *coming down from heaven*, to mean, simply, the communicating of this heavenly knowledge to mankind. To which we reply, that if *coming down from heaven* be a metaphor, it must have a meaning precisely the opposite of that which belongs to the counter metaphor of *ascending up into heaven*: and in that case, if the latter figure means, *obtaining a perfect knowledge of the divine counsels*, the former must signify the losing of such knowledge, or the non-possession of it. And what sort of sense will this give? Although it is a very obvious and easy figure to say, that a man, who acquires a supernatural knowledge of divine things, *ascends up to heaven*, I cannot see with what propriety, or force, he, who imparts divine knowledge to others, can be said *to come down from heaven*. The knowledge itself may be said to come down from heaven, but not the man who possesses or imparts it. But according to our interpretation, the passage bears a very easy and natural sense; *No man hath enjoyed the opportunity of acquiring an intimate and perfect knowledge of the counsels of GOD, but he who came down from heaven; even the SON of MAN, who was in heaven;* (for so the original words may be rendered.*) Compare this passage with the 18th verse of the first chapter, (examined in the Second Part of these Considerations,) and you will see how the one explains and enforces the other. Our LORD declares, in express terms, of himself, what John the Baptist had before asserted of him, that he had been in heaven, and that he came down from heaven; a declaration which no earthly man, whatever degree of authority or inspiration he might have possessed, would have presumed to make.

The sum and substance of the information, which our LORD gave to Nicodemus, touching the Messiah, was this: That the Messiah was the SON of GOD; his only-begotten SON; not merely a teacher sent from GOD, which Nicodemus had acknowledged JESUS to be: that he was to undergo death; contrary to the prevailing opinion of the Jews, who expected that the Messiah would never die. The particular mode of death which he was to suffer, our LORD did not think fit to disclose, otherwise than by a similitude; but a very strong and pertinent similitude; that, as the brazen serpent was raised up by Moses, in order that the children of Israel, at the sight of it, might be cured of bodily disease; so the

* See Note in Part II, page 2.

Messiah was to be lifted up; that by a steadfast looking to, and firm belief in him, so lifted up, all men might be healed of the spiritual disease of sin—that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*. No words could more pointedly express the efficacy of the death of CHRIST. He is lifted up,* or crucified; *in order that whosoever believeth in him, may have eternal life*. Now surely men might have believed, (and many *did* believe) that JESUS was the Messiah, a prophet sent from God, without his being crucified; and indeed our SAVIOUR does not say that he was to be crucified, that men might believe in him, but in order that those who *did believe* in him, might be saved. It is then a plain and necessary inference, that the death of CHRIST was the indispensable condition of man's salvation; and that the belief, required of Christians, is a belief in the efficacy of that death.

It is added, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life—gave, i. e. gave up to death; as in Luke xxi. 19, This is my body which is given for you*. But as God is here said to have given his only-begotten SON, so it is said of CHRIST, by St. Paul, that he *gave himself for our sins*.† In the same sense, he is said to have been given up, or *delivered for our offences*.‡

In this declaration then of our blessed LORD are clearly stated the effects of his death upon the cross; it liberated mankind from the penalty of eternal death, and procured to them the capacity of eternal life. And this is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, which we should cherish, as we value our religious steadfastness in this world, or our hope in another. The atonement made for our sins by the sacrifice of the incarnate Word, is the distinguishing and consolatory feature of his religion. Upon our faith in that depends our capacity of receiving divine grace through him. If JESUS was no more than man, his death upon the cross had no more virtue, nor efficacy, than the death of any other holy man, who at any time has died in defence of the truth: it was an attestation of his own sincerity and rectitude of intention; but it could have no influence upon the condition of other men's souls, with respect to the punishment due to sin; for, as the Psalmist says, *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth (or is let alone) for ever*.§ Deny the exalted nature of the Redeemer; reduce him to the common level of the human race; and the Atonement is done away: He is no longer the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*: He is no longer that SAVIOUR, who *gave his life a ransom for many*,|| and for us amongst the rest: the comfortable assurance of a propitiation made for our sins,

* So vlii. 23, *When ye have LIFTED UP the SON of MAN—xii. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*. This, adds the Evangelist, he said, signifying what death he should die.

† Gal. i. 4.

‡ Rom. iv. 25.

§ Ps. xlii. 7.

|| Matt. xx. 28.

which we have clung to as *an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,** is withdrawn from us ; and we are left under the penalty due to those, who are commanded to fulfil the law of righteousness, but are incapacitated by their nature from doing so ; and who have no means whatever of making even the slightest amends for their deficiencies. The Scriptures of the New Testament become confused and obscure ; the declarations of our LORD and his Apostles inconsistent with one another ; the dignity of the Gospel dispensation lowered, the beauty of its holiness defaced. Oh, let us beware of falling under that fearful denunciation of the Apostle ; *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall HE be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of Grace?†*

Our SAVIOUR declares, in the 18th verse of the third chapter, that *he that believeth on him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten SON of GOD ; that is, because he hath not believed him to be tha', which he professed to be, the only-begotten SON of GOD.* Surely this indicates very clearly the object of a Christian's faith ; the only-begotten SON of GOD, made flesh, and crucified for our sins ; and *set forth to be a propitiation THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.‡*

Having already considered the testimony of John the Baptist, recorded in the latter part of the third chapter, I will only recall your attention to the marked manner in which he contrasts the nature of the Messiah with his own ; *He that cometh from above, is above all ; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth ; he that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, he testifieth.* Here are three points of difference. The Baptist says of himself, that he is of the earth ; that he is consequently earthly in his nature ; and that, as to his doctrine, he speaketh earthly things : in each of these particulars he marks a contrast in the person of the CHRIST ; *he is from above, of heaven ; he is consequently superior to all, in nature heavenly ; and he testifieth what he hath seen and heard ; i. e. in heaven.* The parallel is thus perfect, and the contrast complete.

I will only add one remark : how strange it is, that, while John the Baptist, who did not live to see the consummation of the divine plan of mercy, spoke in such magnificent language of the exalted nature of the REDEEMER, Christians, who have before them the still stronger declarations of our LORD and his Apostles, should attempt to degrade the dignity of his person, and to disparage the worthiness of the sacrifice which he offered for the sins of the world.

In the fourth chapter is related our SAVIOUR's conversation with the woman of Samaria. From her words, *I know that Messias*

* Heb. vi. 19.

† Heb. x. 29.

‡ Rom. iii. 25.

*cometh,** it appears that the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, were looking for the advent of the CHRIST; and if we may judge from the woman's expression, *when he is come he will tell us all things*, their notions of the Messiah's office were far more correct than those which were held by the Scribes and Pharisees. Afterwards, when the Samaritans, amongst whom our SAVIOUR abode two days, had heard his preaching, they said to the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the world.†* The despised and detested Samaritans, uncorrupted by vain traditions, and selfish expectations, recognized at once the great teacher and redeemer of the world: while the Jews, who fancied themselves possessed of the key of divine knowledge, and masters of every circumstance relating to their own Messiah, as they considered him, rejected and reviled the meek and holy JESUS, calumniated his miracles, and despised his preaching.

In return for the honest readiness of the Samaritans, JESUS told them in plain, unequivocal language, that he was indeed the Messiah: he accepted from them the title of the Saviour of the World; and the whole transaction is recorded by St. John, with a view to his main object, that of proving, from the discourses of JESUS, the superior dignity of his nature. Let us make, by the way, one reflection upon this incident in our SAVIOUR's ministry; that divine knowledge is most readily and abundantly communicated to those minds, which are least possessed by prejudice, or by any opinion of superior wisdom.

In the fifth chapter is related the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. When the Jews persecuted JESUS, and sought to slay him because he had done this thing on the sabbath-day, JESUS answered them, *My FATHER worketh hitherto, and I work;‡* that is, my FATHER exercises his power and providence continually, without the intervention of rest; in like manner, I perform divine works when I please. This was a plain assumption of divine authority; and so his hearers understood it: *therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that GOD was his FATHER, making himself equal with GOD.§* You will remark, that the Evangelist does not say, that the Jews supposed JESUS to have said this, or that they misunderstood him; but that they were incensed, because he actually did make himself equal with GOD.

One thing is certain, that the Jews understood the phrase of the SON of GOD to imply an immediate connexion with the FATHER, of a peculiar and sublime nature. And if they had been mistaken in that notion, JESUS would surely either have forbore from applying it to himself upon all occasions, or have given some explanation of it. But what is the real state of the case? Instead of disclaiming that equality with GOD, which the Jews understood him

* John iv. 25.

† John iv. 42.

‡ John v. 17.

§ John v. 18.

to assert, he enforces it, and enters into particular instances: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The SON can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the FATHER do; for what things soever he doeth these also doeth the SON likewise.**

The SON then has equal power with the FATHER; but it cannot be that the FATHER and the SON should be opposed to, or differing from each other, in the exercise of their power; because their will, as well as their power, is identical: *For the FATHER loveth the SON, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth.†* The word "sheweth" evidently means a communication, not only of knowledge, but of power,—*And he will shew you greater works than these, that ye may marvel, i. e. in such a degree as to excite the astonishment and admiration of men.* These greater manifestations of divine authority and power our SAVIOUR then proceeds to specify, namely, the raising of the dead to life, and the final judgment of mankind; which he declares to be committed to him by the FATHER, and yet to belong to him, by virtue of his own power. *For as the FATHER raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the SON quickeneth whom he will. For the FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON: that all men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER.‡* Let me ask, would any man of common understanding, who has no preconceived opinions upon disputed points of theology, put any other interpretation upon these words, than that which lies on the surface, that the SON is to be believed in, and loved, and worshipped equally with the FATHER? Our SAVIOUR adds, *He that honoureth not the SON, honoureth not the FATHER which hath sent him.—As the FATHER hath life in himself; so hath he given to the SON to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment because he is the SON of MAN.§*

There is a peculiar propriety, if we may presume so to speak, in the appointment of CHRIST to be the judge of men, because he has himself been made flesh, or taken a human body; because he has been *in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.||* As the Redeemer of Mankind, as having the power of conferring eternal life, he is spoken of in the Scriptures under the title of the SON of GOD: as having taken their nature upon him, as the second Adam, and as the great judge of the human race, he is called the SON of MAN.

Our LORD then states, that he can do nothing distinctly from, and independently of the FATHER; that the same judgment which the FATHER would pronounce, will be pronounced by the SON; who, in knowledge and in will, is one with the FATHER: *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the FATHER which hath sent me.¶*

* John v. 19.
§ John v. 26.

† John v. 20.
|| Heb. iv. 15.

‡ John v. 21.
¶ John v. 30.

Let us now briefly recapitulate the chief points of this remarkable discourse to the Jews. Our LORD declares, that he came from the FATHER; that he did nothing of his own independent will and judgment, as distinct from those of the FATHER; but every thing in intimate conjunction with him; that he was the SON of GOD, and, as such, co-equal with him in power and authority; that he was appointed to raise the dead, and to judge the human race according to their works; that he was therefore the Messiah, spoken of by the prophets, and expected by the Jews: *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me: had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words.**

To him, who can rise from the perusal of this chapter of St. John, unmoved by the evidence which it affords to the great doctrine of a divine Redeemer, we may surely apply the same language of expostulation in which our LORD addressed the Jews. No reasoning, no moral demonstration will satisfy *him*, who will not receive, with simplicity and meekness, the plain words of Scripture. We refer him to the Evangelist, the companion and friend of CHRIST; we intreat him seriously and candidly to weigh *his* testimony, against the surmises of his own limited understanding; and if he still remain in a state of doubt and unbelief, all further argument is vain; *if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

* John v. 39, 46.

"Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."—*St. Mark*, xiii. 26.

HE disparages the beauty of the sun, who inquires for a rule to know when the sun shines, or the light breaks forth from its chambers in the east; and the SON of MAN shall need no other signification, but his infinite retinue, and all the angels of GOD worshipping Him, and sitting on a cloud, and leading the heavenly host, and bringing his elect with Him, and being clothed with the robes of majesty, and trampling on devils, and confounding the wicked and destroying death: but all these great things shall be invested with such strange circumstances, and annexes of mightiness and divinity, that all the world shall confess the glories of the LORD; and this is sufficiently signified by St. Paul; 'we shall all be set before the throne or place of CHRIST's judicature; for it is written, as I live, saith the LORD, every knee shall bend to me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD:' that is, at the day of judgment, when we are placed ready to receive our sentence, all knees shall bow to the holy JESUS, and confess Him to be GOD the LORD; meaning that our LORD's presence shall be such as to force obei-

sance from angels and men and devils ; and His address to judgment shall sufficiently declare His person and his office, and His proper glories.

THEN "shall they look on him whom they have pierced." It was for thy sins that this glorious Judge did suffer such unspeakable pains, as were enough to reconcile the whole world unto God ; the sum and spirit of which pains could not be better understood than by the consequences of his own words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" meaning that he felt such horrible pure unmingled sorrows, that although the human nature was personally united to the Godhead, yet at that instant he felt no comfortable emanations by sensible perception from the Divinity, but he was so drenched in sorrow that the Godhead seemed to have forsaken him. Beyond this nothing can be added ; but then, that thou hast for thine own particular made all this in vain and ineffective, that CHRIST thy LORD and Judge should be tormented for nothing, that thou wouldest not accept felicity and pardon when he purchased them at so dear a price, must needs be an infinite condemnation to such persons. How shalt thou look on Him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn his miraculous mercies ? How shall we dare to behold that lovely face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sins ? and yet in the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. All the pains and passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labors and the watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whips and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave, of JESUS, shall be laid on thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of their holy ends and purposes. And if we remember what a calamity that was which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when CHRIST came to judge them for their murdering Him, who was their king and the prince of life ; and consider that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment ; we may then apprehend that there is some strange unspeakable evil that attends them that are guilty of this death and of so much evil to their LORD. Now it is certain that if thou wilt not be saved by his death, thou art guilty of his death ; if thou wilt not suffer him to save thee, thou art guilty of destroying him : and then let it be considered what is to be expected from that Judge before whom you stand as His murderer and betrayer.

Bp. Jer. Taylor.

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THE
EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR,
FURNISHED BY
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Part II.

No man hath seen GOD at any time. The only-begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him,—*John* i. 18.

In the fourteenth verse of the first chapter of St. John, the Evangelist declares, that he and his fellow-disciples had beholden the glory of the incarnate Word, *as of the only-begotten of the Father*; and in the tenth verse he terms him, *the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father*. Is it to be believed, that the beloved disciple of the LORD JESUS would have repeated and enforced so remarkable an expression, if he had not wished to convey to his readers a notion, that CHRIST was the SON of GOD, in a sense entirely different from, and superior to that, in which the angels, and prophets, and holy men of old, were called sons of GOD? Christians are confessedly the children of GOD by adoption and grace; which is more than can be said of any man under the old covenant; yet how different is the language in which the Evangelist speaks of *them*, from that in which he describes our SAVIOUR! *To as many as received him, gave he power to become sons (or children) of GOD*. But CHRIST is called the *only-begotten SON*; i. e. the SON, by a mode of generation peculiar to himself; and therefore not in the same manner in which any other being whatever could be called the SON of GOD. The Unitarians indeed pretend, that the word, as used by St. John, means nothing more than *dearly beloved*: but even if we admit this interpretation to be true (which, however, has been again and again refuted,) still it implies the highest possible degree of affection, such as a father feels towards his only son: and even in this

great and sublime doctrines of the divine nature, and mediatorial office of JESUS CHRIST.

It was in allusion to these doctrines, that the Gospel of St. John was called by the ancient Christians, "the spiritual Gospel;" and to every mind, which is properly disposed to receive, with humble thankfulness, the revelation of the great mystery of godliness, or qualified to admire and reverence the unspeakable love, and pity, and condescension of the Redeemer, this Gospel is in the highest degree interesting and affecting. It is natural that it should be so. It was written by the disciple whom JESUS loved; whose head rested on his bosom; whom he vouchsafed to take with him as a witness of his transfiguration; and to whose care, upon his departure from the world, he commended his aged mother. No other disciple was likely to write with more warmth of affection, or a greater zeal for the honour of his LORD; or to give a more faithful transcript of the discourses of Him, who spake as never man spake.

The Gospel of St. John was written several years after those of the other Evangelists; and evidently with a different object. They relate the principal incidents of our SAVIOUR's life; St. John is more diligent in recording his discourses. The other Evangelists enumerate a great variety of miracles; St. John describes only a few of the most remarkable, which had a more immediate reference to the particular object of his Gospel. They repeat the discourses which JESUS held with the people, mostly in Galilee, in the form of parables and short moral sentences; John has preserved the longer and more argumentative conversations of our SAVIOUR with the learned Jews, on the subject of the Messiah; and those in which he explained to his disciples the nature of his mission and office.

Now it is very plain, that whatever other objects St. John may have had in view, this was one,—to convey to the Christian world just and adequate notions of the real nature, character, and office of that great teacher, who came to instruct and redeem mankind. For this purpose, he studiously selected for his narrative those passages of our SAVIOUR's life, which most clearly displayed His divine power and authority; and those of His discourses, in which He spoke most plainly of His own nature, and of the efficacy of His death, as an atonement for the sins of the world. The object, which this Evangelist had in view, is very clearly stated in his concluding words. It was not to accumulate as many instances as possible of the miraculous power exerted by JESUS; but only those which most distinctly illustrated his peculiar office and nature: *Many other signs truly did JESUS, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But THESE are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON OF GOD: and that believing, ye might have life through his name.*

Whoever, then, desires to form a just notion of the real office and dignity of the SAVIOUR of the world let him study the repre-

sentations which JESUS has given of himself, in the discourses recorded by St. John. The Apostles speak of him in their Epistles, it is true, in noble and characteristic expressions: but *here* the SAVIOUR speaks of himself, and in language which no ingenuity can pervert.

St. Matthew and St. Luke begin by relating the circumstances attending the birth of JESUS; and trace his genealogy from David, whose descendant the promised Messiah was to be. But John introduces him at once in his divine character, as having existed before the world began, himself the Creator of the world. And having thus, in the very opening of his Gospel, announced the transcendent dignity of his subject, he takes occasion to inculcate the same truth throughout the whole of his subsequent history. With this notion of the scope and purpose of the Evangelist, his Gospel is clear, consistent, and intelligible: upon any other supposition, it is obscure and inexplicable.

In the beginning, says the Evangelist, *was the Word*. Whatever may have been the origin of this expression of the *Word*, it is quite evident that it means JESUS CHRIST; for in the following verses he is described in terms which leave no room for doubt. *In the beginning*, i. e. in the beginning of time; from all eternity. Here, then, is asserted the eternal pre-existence of JESUS CHRIST. On what authority does St. John assert it? On the express testimony of our LORD himself; who in his prayer to the FATHER, said, *And now, O FATHER, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world began.** These words abundantly refute the interpretation which the Unitarians would put upon the words of the Gospel, who say that *in the beginning* means simply "from the commencement of CHRIST's ministry;" so that John is made to say this; 'CHRIST was, or existed, in the commencement of his ministry:' a strangely unmeaning sentence. But no unprejudiced person can doubt, that the Evangelist follows the historian of the creation; that as Moses declares, *IN THE BEGINNING GOD created the heaven and the earth*; so John uses the phrase in the same, or in a still higher sense. Agreeably to this St. Paul tells us, that *GOD hath chosen us in CHRIST before the foundation of the world.†* In the next place, as a question might probably be asked, Where was the CHRIST in this state of pre-existence? the Evangelist adds, *And the Word was with GOD*; agreeably to the declaration of our LORD above mentioned, *glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world began*. And again, *I came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent me, viz. GOD*.

But according to St. John, not only was the Word *with* GOD, but the Word *was* GOD. So direct and irrefragable is this testimony to the divine nature of JESUS CHRIST, that the Unitarians are driven to the most unreasonable methods of interpretation and

some of them to a still bolder measure than misinterpretation, that of rejecting the whole Gospel, as not having been written by St. John.

We need not dwell at length upon this point; for the words which next follow are so precise, that they seem to have been employed by St. John for the express purpose of excluding all equivocation. *All things were made by him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.* This passage the Unitarians translate, "all things were done by him, and without him was not any thing done that was done." But *we*, I think, may be very well content to understand it as an Apostle has done; who, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, declares expressly, that God *made the worlds by his SON*.* The same writer says, *through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God*.† From these two passages it is clear that the *Word of God* is the *SON of God*; that by him all things were created; and that the Unitarian interpretation is unfounded.

But since an opinion might be entertained by some, that CHRIST was only the instrument of creation, in the hands of his Almighty FATHER, himself having been created, the Apostle shuts out that supposition by saying, that *without him was not any thing made that was made.* If so, CHRIST himself was uncreate; and therefore self-existent. This assertion destroys what is called the Arian scheme, according to which the divine Word was the first and highest of created beings. St. John declares that the Word was no creature, no, not even of the highest conceivable rank and order; nor created at the remotest point of time. But how are we to reconcile this with St. Paul's expression in his Epistle to the Colossians, where he says of the SON; *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature*?‡ We answer thus: The original word either implies that inconceivable generation, by which the SON came from the FATHER from all eternity, as in Heb. i. 6, *When he bringeth the first-begotten [or first-born] into the world*; or it may mean, for it will bear the sense, *the first producer* of the whole creation; and this interpretation seems to be rendered probable by the words which immediately follow, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

St. John then proceeds to state, that the Divine Word created all things, as possessing in himself the power of giving life: *In him was life.* Our SAVIOUR says of himself in the fifth chapter;

* Heb. i. 2.

† Heb. xi. 3. Compare Col. i. 16. *By HIM were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.* The Unitarians would explain this to mean, "that all things were done by CHRIST which relate to the Christian dispensation!"

‡ Col. i. 15.

The Son quickeneth, or giveth life, to whom he will.—As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and he is there contrasting life with actual corporal death. The Evangelist then, who remembered our LORD's expressions, must have intended here the power of communicating life, properly so called; and not merely, as the Unitarians pretend, "the words of eternal life."

And the life, says St. John, was the light of men. This divine Being, who was the source and giver of life to the things of creation, was also the fountain of spiritual light to mankind: having been sent by the FATHER to enlighten their understandings with the knowledge of true religion. Here again the Apostle adopts the language of his divine Master, who said of himself, *I am the light of the world*;* and in a lower sense he declared to his Apostles, *Ye are the light of the world.* He himself was pre-eminently *the light of men*; for he was that *Sun of righteousness that arose with healing in his wings*;† the *great Light* which was seen by the people that walked in darkness, and in the land of the shadow of death.‡ Perhaps also the term "light" implies *blessing*: a metaphor frequent in Jewish writers. The almighty Author of good is called by St. James, *the Father of lights*.§ JESUS CHRIST is indeed the light of men; not merely as the great instructor of mankind in the precepts of his Gospel, but as holding out the glories of his kingdom to all true believers, and illuminating with his Spirit the pious heart, and diffusing through the soul the light and warmth of his grace. He is a light to us in his Word, his sacraments, his ordinances; a light, which none of the changes of life's uncertain day can extinguish or overcast; and which to the faithful Christian shines brighter and brighter, as the shades of evening gather round his declining years.

The use of light is, to disperse the darkness: but the light which shone upon the darkness of men's sinful state, in too many instances shone in vain. Those who were blinded by sinful indulgence or pride, would not take advantage of it: they did not even perceive that it was the light. Both Jews and Gentiles, with comparatively few exceptions, were in this condition: for how very small, when compared with the great mass of mankind, was the number of those who had professed a belief in JESUS CHRIST at the time when St. John wrote! CHRIST crucified was *to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*;|| and so the *light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* I fear that even at the present day this description is too extensively verified. Of those upon whom the light of the Gospel has shined, some reject it, and shut their eyes against it altogether; some profess to receive it, yet seem not to comprehend it, either as to the degree

* John viii. 12.

† Isa. ix. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 23.

† Mal. iv. 2.

§ Jas. i. 17.

in which it was intended to illuminate them, or as to the proportion, which must always exist, between the clearness of our knowledge and the strictness of our duty. Let us be careful not to be such as we should have been, had we been born in the darkness of heathen ignorance and idolatry: *let us walk as children of light*;* ever bearing in mind, that the light which shines upon us, deepens all the shades of our moral character; that the more we know, the more sinful are our defects of practice. Let us also beware of perverting the light, which God has vouchsafed to us in the revelation of his word, to sanction our own erroneous notions or principles; and take good heed, *that the light which is in us be not darkness*.†

Nothing can be more complete, and at the same time more concise, than the attestation, borne by the Evangelist in this preface, to the divine nature of the Messiah. He was in the beginning; existent from all eternity. He was with God, and so distinguished from him in person, and yet *he was God*. And he did not *begin* to be with God, as some have supposed, at a certain definite period of time, before which he was not; but he was *in the beginning with God*, as he declares himself in the Revelations, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the first and the last*. Nor was he created, and consequently a finite being; but *all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*. He contained within himself the principle of universal life and existence; *in him was life*:—men and angels, as well as the humbler tribes of animated beings, received the breath of life from him; and *He was the light of men*, restoring them to the knowledge and favour of God.

After this brief, but sublime description of the Word, the Evangelist proceeds to tell his readers, that it was not John the Baptist, (as some perhaps might think,) of whom he was speaking; who was held in such high estimation by the Jews, that many supposed him to be one of the old prophets returned to life, and some even thought him to be the Messiah himself. And therefore St. John, having mentioned the Baptist as a *man sent from God*, adds, that he was so sent, not to be himself the Messiah, the Word, the Light; but to bear witness of the light, and to prepare men's minds for its reception. *That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*.‡ During the residence of the incarnate Word upon earth, few indeed knew him to be the true light, or at least were aware of his real nature and office. And although he came, in the first instance, to that peculiar peo-

* Ephes. v. 8.

† Luke xi. 35.

‡ The original words may be rendered, *that was the true light, which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man*. And this seems to have a natural coherence with the following words, *He was in the world*. So in iii. 19. *And this is the condemnation, THAT LIGHT IS COME INTO THE WORLD, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*. It does not however seem to be material which version we adopt.

ple, who had been set apart for the purpose of keeping alive the promise of his advent, and to whom that promise more immediately pertained, yet he encountered an ungracious reception. They refused to acknowledge him as the promised Messiah; *He came to his own,* and his own received him not.* Some few, however, there were, who did receive him in that capacity, convinced, as well by the doctrines which he preached, as by the wonderful works which he performed. These he made the first partakers in that great regeneration, which he came to effect, of making all mankind children of God, instead of children of wrath: *i. e.* of imparting to them a capacity of obtaining the favour and forgiveness of their heavenly Father; a change from their former spiritual condition so complete and effectual, that *He* might justly be said to have *begotten them unto a lively hope†* of the inheritance, and they, to have undergone a regeneration, or new birth. This is the meaning of St. John in the twelfth and thirteenth verses: *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Observe the condition of this regeneration—to *them that believe on his name.* As the Evangelist does not explain the meaning of this expression, we must of course understand the belief, which he speaks of, to be a belief in CHRIST, as he has just been described; viz. as the Eternal Word; the creator of the world; the light of men; the source of life. If we have any doubt on this subject, it will be removed by the express words of St. John in his conclusion before quoted, as to the essential point of Christian belief: *These are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD: and that believing, ye might have life through his name.*

Finally, having given this brief but forcible description of the divine nature of the Word, of his power, and efficacy; the Evangelist, in order to obviate any notion of the communication of power from God to the man JESUS, and to meet the objection of the Jews, who denied that the Messiah had come in the flesh, says, that *the Word was made flesh, (i. e. a human person) and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth.‡* John himself beheld the glory of CHRIST, when He was transfigured, and declared by a voice from heaven to be the beloved SON of GOD. St. Peter, who was also present on that occasion, says, *we were eye witnesses of His majesty.§* This glory of the Word was not only that which resulted from his display of supernatural power; but also a visible personal glory; such a glory, according to the Evangelist, as may well be supposed to distinguish the only-begotten SON of GOD.

* The original word may signify *his own house.*

† 1 Pet. i. 3.

‡ John i. 14.

§ 2 Pet. i. 16.

imperfect or unreasonable faith, which would be shaken by the hardships of their profession, or by the difficulties of the Gospel revelation ; which did in fact happen, when our SAVIOUR discoursed to them of the living bread which came down from heaven : *from that time*, says St. John, *many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more.** He knew the force of prejudice, and the pride of human reason, to be so great, as often to prevent men from believing that which they cannot fully comprehend ; he foresaw that many would reject their SAVIOUR, because he came to them in appearance different from what they had expected ; and because he asserted claims, which they could not reconcile with their own notions. The same will ever be the case as long as men set up their own reason for a perfect and paramount guide in matters of religion ; instead of receiving, with humility and thankfulness, the revelation which God is pleased to make of himself, and waiting for a more perfect knowledge of Him, till the time when we shall see Him face to face, and *know even as we also are known.*†

* John * 66.

† 1 Cor. xiii 12.

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[No. 146.]

THE
EVIDENCE
OF THE
DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR,
FURNISHED BY
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Part 1.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD; and that believing, ye might have life through His name.—*John* xx. 31.

THERE is scarcely any part of the sacred Volume, especially of the New Testament, how often soever he may have read it, which will not, upon a careful re-perusal, furnish a Christian with new matter of instruction and reflexion. If those persons, who have leisure and ability for the pursuit, would frequently read the Gospel History, each time with a view to some particular point of inquiry, they would find their labour amply repaid, by a clearer insight into the force and consistency of all its parts. For instance, I would at one time study the narratives of the Evangelists, with a view to the peculiar opinions which the Jews entertained concerning their expected Messiah. I would read them again, with reference to the personal character and conduct of our SAVIOUR; at another time, for the purpose of comparing all the parables which speak of the kingdom of heaven; at another, with an eye to the fulfilment, or abrogation, of the Mosaic law; and lastly, with a particular attention to that important and capital feature of the Gospel dispensation, the office and nature of our blessed SAVIOUR. In this respect, if one part of holy Scripture may be said to be peculiarly valuable, the Gospel, according to St. John, is so. While it informs us of many things, about which the other Evangelists are silent, and takes but little notice of others, upon which they enlarge; it more especially inculcates, and dwells upon, the

case we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that CHRIST is *the object of a peculiar and unparalleled divine love*, and is the SON of GOD in a sense exclusively belonging to himself.

No man, says the Evangelist, *hath seen God at any time*, i. e. hath had a perfect comprehension of his nature and attributes. We may conjecture his power and wisdom, and goodness, from the works of creation : but to *know* him, to have a certain acquaintance with divine things, and especially with the secrets of his moral government of the world, is what no man can boast of. Yet this knowledge, to such an extent, as is proportioned to the faculties of the human mind, has been revealed to us by the SON of GOD, who was always,* to use an image expressive of perfect familiarity, in the bosom of his FATHER ; and knew his most intimate counsels, and was therefore able to impart to us that enlarged and just knowledge of GOD, which neither Moses, nor any of the prophets possessed. Is it credible, that the Evangelist could have said of a mere man, that he was *in the bosom of GOD the FATHER* ? Surely such an expression would be little short of impious. Let us put the following case to a Unitarian, who maintains that the simple humanity of JESUS CHRIST is the plain undeniable doctrine of the New Testament :

Suppose that the Gospel had been recently published to the world ; and that a diversity of opinions had begun to prevail amongst those who had embraced it, relating to the person and office of JESUS CHRIST. His favourite disciple, who must naturally be desirous that correct notions should be entertained upon this point, knowing that men's opinions are divided, applies himself to record certain incidents of his Master's life, and certain of his discourses, which may throw some light upon the points in dispute. If he is convinced that JESUS, although an inspired prophet, was no more than a man, he will take care to avoid all ambiguous expressions, which may be construed into an assertion of his divinity.

Now St. John was precisely in that predicament ; he knew that erroneous opinions were abroad concerning the nature of CHRIST ; for he says in his first Epistle, *Who is a liar, but he that denieth that JESUS is the CHRIST ? He is antichrist, that denieth the FATHER and the SON.*† Yet how does he begin his account of JESUS CHRIST ? Does he speak of him as a highly gifted and divinely commissioned man ? No ; he seems to take all possible care to exclude the supposition. He says of John the Baptist (whom our LORD pronounced to be *more than a prophet*,) that he *was a man sent from GOD* ; but of CHRIST, he declares, in unqual-

* The original words should probably be translated, *who was in the bosom of the FATHER*. So in iii. 13, *No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the SON of MAN which is in heaven*, rather, *which was in heaven*. The original in both instances is the present participle *being*. This is the interpretation of the best commentators.

† 1 John ii. 22.

ified terms, that he was in the beginning ; that he was with GOD ; that he was the only-begotten SON ; in the bosom of the FATHER ; that he was GOD ; that he was the Creator of all things, himself uncreate ; that he is the source of life, and the light of men ; that he was made flesh (which implies that he had borne a spiritual nature before ;) and that John the Baptist, although older than JESUS, declared that JESUS was preferred before him, *for he was before him* ;* i. e. existed before him : an expression which would be well understood by the Jews, who entertained a notion of the pre-existence of their expected Messiah.† Would an Evangelist, entertaining the opinions which the Unitarians of the present day profess, have opened his Gospel with a series of expressions, so strongly declaratory of the divine nature of CHRIST, that in order to avoid the force of them, we must call in the aid of allegory of the harshest and most unusual kind ! Surely it is not possible to read the first verses of St. John, taking for our guides the acknowledged and usual rules of interpretation, without perceiving the irresistible evidence which they afford to the grand doctrine of our LORD's divinity.

Let us now consider the testimony borne by John the Baptist. After having professed himself not worthy to unloose the shoe-latchet of that great Unknown, who, coming after him, was preferred before him ; the next day, seeing JESUS coming unto him, he saith, *Behold the LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world.* “ Afterwards, when JESUS was baptizing the Jews by his disciples, and many resorted to him, the disciples of John, jealous of the honour of their master, complained to him that JESUS drew away the people to himself, and took upon him the office of baptizing them. Upon this John, with great sincerity and modesty, declared how much he was inferior to CHRIST : He reminded them how often he had said that he was not the Messias, but the fore-runner ; he told them that his office would soon expire, and that CHRIST, who then began to appear, should obscure his glory ; which was to him a cause of joy, not of envy ; he told them that CHRIST was the beloved SON of GOD, sent by him, and received from him the Holy Spirit without measure, to reside upon him at all times, and to direct him in all things ; that therefore whosoever believed in him should have everlasting life, and whoever rejected him, should not see life, but the wrath of GOD should abide upon him.”‡

. All this is stated in the latter part of the third chapter ; where the Baptist expressly distinguishes between men, who are of the

* The Unitarian Version says, “ for he is my principal.” It would hardly edify the class of readers for whom these Tracts are intended, if I were to enter upon a verbal criticism, and show, as others have done before, that this interpretation is wholly unjustifiable.

† The following expression occurs in an ancient Jewish commentary on Gen. xlix. 2. “ It is written (Gen. i. 2.) *The SPIRIT of GOD brooded on the waters.* That Spirit is the Spirit of Messiah the King.”

‡ Jortin on the Christian Religion, p. 182.

earth, earthly, and CHRIST, *who cometh from heaven, and is above all*; as St. Paul afterwards expressed it, *the first man is of the earth, earthly, the second man is the LORD from heaven*.^{*} What interpretation does common sense require us to put upon these words? We have the forerunner of our LORD, and his Apostle, and our LORD himself in his conference with Nicodemus, concurring in the same plain, intelligible assertion, that the CHRIST, whether spoken of a SON of GOD, or SON of MAN, came down from heaven. Yet the Unitarians would persuade us, that "coming from heaven" means nothing more than receiving a divine commission. But how is this interpretation to be reconciled with the 51st verse of the sixth chapter, where our SAVIOUR says, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*? The Jews understood those words of a literal descent from heaven;† and when some of his disciples were offended at that notion, he said, *Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the SON of MAN ascend up, WHERE HE WAS BEFORE*?‡

John the Baptist calls our SAVIOUR, *the LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world*. The persons to whom he spoke were Jews: in what sense would they *naturally* understand him? If we can resolve this question, we shall ascertain the real meaning of the Baptist's words. They could hardly have comprehended the appellation of the LAMB of GOD, except as referring to the lamb, which was sacrificed in the rite of purification, or to that passage of Isaiah, with which the Jews were familiar, in which it is said of the Messiah, *the LORD hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all—he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter*.§ In either case, the comparison involved the idea of a violent death; and that death was connected, by the following words, with a liberation from sin, that is, from the punishment of sin.

Some indeed have contended, that the Baptist employed this image, merely to denote the purity of CHRIST's character; and that 'taking away the sin of the world' means simply the reformation of manners which he was to effect. But if we attend to the analogy of scripture, we must explain this passage of a sacrificial atonement for sin, to be made by the death of CHRIST; for St. Peter tells his readers, that they *were redeemed—with the precious blood of CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*;|| an image which is very prominent in the Revelations. We may remark, by the way, that our SAVIOUR is here described as bearing, or taking away *the sin of the world*. So in his first Epistle, St. John says, that *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but for the sins of the whole world*;¶ from which passage it is plain, that the plan of divine

* 1 Cor. xv. 47.

† See Lect. IV.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 19.

† John vi. 42.

§ Isaiah lviii. 6.

|| 1 John ii 2.

mercy is not limited to a certain number of chosen individuals. Lastly, although John, under the guidance of the Spirit, designated JESUS as one who was to be slain, with the approbation of God; and who was to take upon himself the sin of the world, it does not follow that John himself, much less those who heard him, entertained a just and adequate notion of the manner in which this was to be effected.

“ Thus then is John the Baptist a witness of CHRIST, his office and dignity; he calls CHRIST the SON of GOD, and the Redeemer of the world; he affirms that he had a being before he appeared on the earth; that he came from GOD to teach men the way to obtain eternal life; he asserts that he saw the Spirit descend upon him, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be the SON of GOD.”*

One remarkable circumstance here demands our notice. The Baptist speaks of *the* SON of GOD, without giving any explanation of the term. It must then have been familiar to the Jews, as a title of their expected Messiah. In like manner we find the term *Son of Man*, and *Son of David* used of the Messiah, without explanation, because they were current amongst the Jews, as scriptural designations of the great deliverer. So also *the kingdom of heaven* was a phrase in common use amongst them, to denote the dominion which the Messiah was to establish upon earth.

The testimony, borne by John the Baptist, to the superior dignity and authority of JESUS, induced two of his disciples to follow this new teacher; and after having passed some hours in conversation with him, one of them said to his brother, Simon, *We have found the Messias*. The day following, Philip, who had been called by JESUS, said to Nathaniel, *We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph*. Nathaniel, struck by the supernatural knowledge which JESUS displayed at their first interview, exclaimed, *Rabbi, thou art the SON of GOD, thou art the King of Israel, i. e. thou art the expected Messiah*. We must not interpret this declaration too strictly, as implying that Nathaniel possessed a just or adequate belief of the divine nature of CHRIST. The conceptions which the Jews at that time entertained on the subject of their Messiah, were in some respects gross and earthly; but the appellation, of SON of GOD, thus applied, surely indicated a belief that JESUS was something more than a mere man. The time was not yet come for a fuller revelation of the great mystery of godliness; but our SAVIOUR said to the pious Israelite. *Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.—Verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*. That is, ye shall see many wonderful instances of the intimate connexion and communication be-

tween my heavenly FATHER and myself; many singular displays of divine power exerted in attestation of my Messiahship. So in Psalm xci. 11, the angels of GOD are represented as entrusted with the guardianship of righteous men: *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*; and in Psalm xxxiv. 7, *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him; and delivereth them.*

Within a few days after this promise had been made, it began to receive its fulfilment, in the first miracle which JESUS wrought, in Cana of Galilee; by which, says the Evangelist, *he manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.* He exhibited the most convincing proofs of his divine power; and his followers were now confirmed in their faith.

Shortly afterwards occurred that remarkable transaction, which was repeated towards the conclusion of his ministry, the expulsion of the money-changers, and those who sold animals for the uses of worshippers, from the outer court of the temple. We need not pause here to consider the intent of that unusual exercise of authority on the part of our SAVIOUR; but I wish to direct your attention to the words which he used on that occasion; *Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandize.* So, when his parents found him at Jerusalem, disputing with the doctors in the temple, he said, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* or, as the words should probably be rendered, *that I must be in my Father's house?* Surely this would be a strange and presumptuous mode of speech to be used by a mere man. Had JESUS been no more than a creature, although inspired, he would rather, one would think, have said, *Make not your heavenly Father's house a house of merchandize*; agreeable to his mode of expression, when he alluded to the relation in which his disciples stood to GOD; *your Father which is in heaven.*

But to this question we shall have occasion to revert hereafter. At present let us attend to his answer to the Jews, when they required a sign of him, in attestation of his authority, *Destroy this temple* (i. e. his body) *and in three days I will raise it up*;* that is, my resurrection from the dead, on the third day after you shall have put me to death, shall be an evident and convincing proof of my divine mission. But in what manner, and by whose power, was this miracle to be effected? undoubtedly by the power of GOD; and yet our LORD says, *I will raise it up*; an apparent discrepancy, which cannot well be reconciled, but by concluding that the FATHER and the SON are one. *As the FATHER raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the SON quickeneth whom he will.*† “He, then, which quickeneth the dead bodies of others, when he raiseth them, he also quickened his own body when he

* John xi. 19

† John v. 21.

raised that.”* Again, our LORD declared, *I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*† “If CHRIST had done no more in the Resurrection than lifting up his own body when it was revived,” (which is the interpretation put by some Unitarians upon our SAVIOUR’s expression of *raising up his own body*,) “he had done that which any other person might have done, and so had not declared himself to be the SON of GOD with power.” It remaineth, therefore, “that CHRIST, by that power which he had within himself, did take his life again which he had laid down, did re-unite his soul unto his body, from which he separated it when he gave up the ghost; and so did quicken and revive himself: and so it is a certain truth, not only that GOD the FATHER raised the SON, but also that GOD the SON raised himself.”‡

If it be said that JESUS, when he spoke of doing, as of his own authority, the most wonderful miracles, intended only to assert the power which he had received from GOD, for the purpose of attesting his mission; we reply, that no man, who was conscious of deriving all his authority and power from GOD, could with propriety have used such unqualified language in describing his own exercise of that power. We do not find that the Apostles, when they wrought many wonderful works by the power which was vested in them, spoke of them as their own acts; but, on the contrary, they expressly disclaimed all share in them, except as far as GOD had been pleased to make them the instruments of his goodness. When Peter had excited the astonishment of the people by restoring the lame man in the temple, he addressed them thus: *Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? the faith which is by him (JESUS) hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*§ If now, as the Unitarians say, power was communicated to CHRIST, as it was afterwards to the Apostles; how can we account for the fact, that our LORD always spoke of performing miracles on his own authority, and by virtue of his intrinsic power, while the Apostles studiously avoided all appearance of claiming such a power, and represented themselves as mere instruments in the hands of GOD?||

In the conclusion of the second chapter it is stated, that although many believed on the name of JESUS (*i. e.* believed him to be the Messiah) in consequence of the miracles which he performed at Jerusalem during the Passover, *he did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.* And he perceived, no doubt, that of those who professed to believe in him, many entertained an

* Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. V.

† John x. 17.

‡ Bp. Pearson on the Creed, Art. V.

§ Acts iii. 12, 16.

|| Add to this, that the Apostles worked their miracles in the name of Jesus.

his SON, not in the sense in which other holy men have been honoured with that title; but the SON of GOD, by a mode of generation peculiar to himself; his *only-begotten* SON. The words, *full of grace and truth*, refer to the first part of the sentence, which will appear plainer, if it be read thus; *And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the FATHER.*

From this explanation of the first chapter of St. John, it appears, that his chief object, in writing it, was to assert the divinity of the ETERNAL Word: and the same object, as we shall hereafter see, displays itself throughout the whole of this Gospel.

If men would be content to receive, with simplicity and seriousness of intention, such information respecting the dispensations of GOD, as GOD himself has been pleased to give, and in the form in which He has given it, this purpose of the Evangelist would be so obvious, as to need no illustration. But since those persons, who reject all such parts of revelation as are above their own comprehension, have endeavoured to explain away the force and meaning of the testimony, which this great Evangelist has borne to the divinity of CHRIST; we shall not have been unprofitably employed, if we have stated that testimony in a clear and comprehensive point of view. It will serve, if not needed to exalt our own notions of the Redeemer's person and office, yet even then to strengthen and enliven our faith; and in any case to confirm us in the comfortable assurance, that JESUS is indeed *the CHRIST, the SON of the living God.*

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AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PARENTS OF CHILDREN RECEIVED INTO SUNDAY
AND INFANT SCHOOLS.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS; (for by that *name* we hope you may be addressed, and God grant that you may be such in *spirit* also;) in this short address you will be told for what purposes these schools were set on foot, and you will also be reminded of some things which you must do, in order that your children may receive that good from these schools which they are intended to afford. You are commanded in the Scriptures, that is to say you are commanded by God himself, to “bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and, for not doing so, you will be answerable at the great day of judgment. These schools are opened to assist you in doing this your bounden duty. They will help you to lead your children forward in the way they should go, that, as they grow up, they may not depart from it. This way is the good and happy way which leadeth unto heaven, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who has graciously commanded us to bring unto him little children, and not forbid them. In these schools your children are brought, in their earliest years, to the knowledge of God, trained up in the fear and love of him, and in the faith of his Son JESUS CHRIST; and every endeavor is used to make them, as He was, dutiful and obedient to their parents, just and honest, kind and gentle toward every body, and mindful of their duty to God. They are also taught the beginning of that knowledge, which must be useful to them in whatever situation of life they may hereafter be placed. Such are the important objects of these schools; but, Christian parents, it depends in a great measure upon yourselves, whether or not your children shall profit by them as we desire that they should. You must

ON NO ACCOUNT KEEP YOUR CHILDREN AWAY FROM SCHOOL,
except when they are ill: but send them regularly, and at the
appointed time, clean washed and combed. If this be not done

your children will not be suffered to remain in the school. But there is a matter to which you will have to attend, of far greater consequence than washing and combing, or even feeding and clothing your little ones ; and the attending to it is a part of the service which you owe to GOD and CHRIST, and which, if you neglect, you will be great sinners indeed ! What we mean is this :

NEVER SET YOUR CHILDREN A BAD EXAMPLE ;

for they will be almost sure to copy it ; and then, what good will *our* teaching do ? If you are guilty of drunkenness, of unchastity, of cheating and dishonesty, of profane swearing, of lying, of filthy conversation, of violating the holiness of the Lord's day, and such grievous sins, what can you expect but that your children should grow up in the same evil courses ? And .. through your bad example, they become wicked, are ruined in this world, and, what is a still more awful thing, doomed to everlasting punishment in the next, what a dreadful thought it will be to you hereafter that your poor children have perished through your means ! Consider that, by setting your children an evil example, you are likely not only to ruin those whose happiness you are bound, and surely must wish, to promote. but you will most certainly provoke God's terrible wrath against yourselves, and bring upon your own heads a more fearful condemnation.

ALWAYS SET YOUR CHILDREN A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Walk before them in the faithful discharge of **every** duty toward God and toward men. Never swear profanely, nor use God's holy name lightly and irreverently ; never speak falsely ; never give way to idle, indecent, and slanderous talk, nor to intemperance of any kind. Keep holy the Lord's day, and be constant and devout attendants at His house ; be diligent in your worldly callings, just and honest in all your dealings, pure and charitable in your conversation, temperate and chaste in thought, word, and deed. Walk before your children in a godly, righteous, and sober life, and, by the help of God's grace, show them the way to heaven.

ALWAYS HEAR YOUR CHILDREN OFFER UP THEIR PRAYERS

every night and morning ; at night when they retire to rest, that they may get pardon for CHRIST's sake for the sins of the day

past. and have the protection of their heavenly Father during the hours of darkness; and in the morning when they rise, having been brought in safety by him to the beginning of another day, that they may be defended, by the help of his grace, against the temptations of this sinful world. Take care also that they offer up their prayers, not in a hurried and careless, but in a serious and devout manner.

When your children do what is wrong,

DO NOT CORRECT THEM VIOLENTLY AND HARSHLY,

but remember those words of St. Paul, "Parents, provoke not your children to wrath;" and, when they require correction, let it be done, not in a fit of angry passion, but in the spirit of meekness; neither be indulgent to their faults, for by such treatment your children will be made obstinate, peevish, ill-tempered, and untractable; "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

DO NOT BREAK OFF THEIR EDUCATION.

When your children are taken away from school do not delay procuring for them the means of instruction which have been provided for older youth; that so the good which they have learned in their infancy may be kept alive, and advance with their increasing years; after the example of their blessed Redeemer, who, as he "grew in stature, increased in wisdom and favor with God and man."

These things, Christian parents, are addressed to you with a real desire to promote the good of your children, who are surely most dear to you, and whose good both in time and eternity, must be the wish of your hearts. Diligently, therefore,

CARRY THE ADVICE HERE GIVEN INTO YOUR DAILY PRACTICE;

and you will have every reason to hope, that by the help of these schools, your children will, with God's grace, grow up to be a blessing to you, a comfort to themselves, useful to their country, and faithful disciples of their Lord and Master, who will hereafter receive them to himself in his heavenly kingdom—and when you yourselves shall be summoned to give an account of your stewardship, before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, you will have the comfort of being able humbly to use the words of your blessed Saviour, and say. "LORD, by the help of thy

heavenly grace and Holy Spirit, of the children whom thou gavest me, have I lost none."

PARENTS PRAYING FOR THEIR OFFSPRING.

God only wise, almighty, good,
Send forth thy truth and light,
To point us out the narrow road,
And guide our steps aright ;
To steer our dangerous course between
The rocks on either hand,
And fix us in the golden mean,
And bring our charge to land.

Made apt by thy sufficient grace
To teach as taught by Thee,
We come to train in all thy ways
Our rising progeny :
Their selfish will by times subdue,
And mortify their pride,
And lend their youth a sacred clue
To find the Crucified.

We would in every step look up,
By thy example taught,
To alarm their fear, excite their hope,
And rectify their thought.
We would persuade them to obey,
With mildest zeal proceed,
And never take the harsher way,
When love will do the deed.

For this we ask, in faith sincere,
The wisdom from above
To touch their hearts with filial fear,
And pure, ingenuous love ;
To watch their will to sense inclined,
Withhold the hurtful food,
And gently bend their tender mind,
And draw their souls to God.

THE

SAILOR'S RELIGION:

A

Sermon,

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY YARD,
BROOKLYN, LONG ISLAND

BY THE REV. THOMAS PYNE, A.M.

NEW-YORK:

NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY!



THE SAILOR'S RELIGION.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep."—*Ps. cvii.* 23, 24.

I FEEL an especial pleasure in addressing an assembly composed chiefly of seamen. They are a class of persons in whom I have ever had the liveliest interest. My earliest wishes were toward the sea; and though God, in his good Providence, has led me to another profession, (the honor and blessedness of which, when rightly fulfilled, can scarcely be expressed,) yet, the thoughts of early youth have by no means lost their influence:—the odor with which a vase is first imbued never entirely passes away. Belonging, too, to a maritime nation,* I have long been taught the great obligations of landmen to those who tread for them the uncertain seas. And, above all this, I have been honored with the acquaintance of some whose names are not unknown upon their country's annals, and personal affection has established that which earlier associations had begun. I mention these things that you may understand the sentiments of respect and consideration with which I address you; and, having declared this, I feel persuaded that I have said enough to gain the frank and manly hearts of sailors, and that they will listen to counsels dictated at once by the solemn and authoritative word of God, and by the good wishes of a fellow-man.

May the HOLY SPIRIT crown our meditation with his blessing!

I would lead your attention to two points.

I. Why a sailor should be religious.

II. What a sailor's religion should be.

I. In the first place, then, let us remark, why a sailor ought to be religious.

I begin with this consideration, because some persons there are so little instructed, or so wicked as to think that the Gospel is only calculated and intended for those on land. Not to speak of the exhortation in our Psalm to those "that go down to the sea in ships" "to praise the LORD;" nor of the Saviour having chosen fishermen among his disciples; nor of St. Paul having preached on board the ship in which he was being conveyed from Palestine to Rome:—not to dwell on the fact that since all mankind are formed alike—since all are sinners—since all possess immortal souls, and must soon appear together before the judgment-bar of CHRIST—what is good for one class, must be equally so for another; and that if food for the body be as much needed by

* England.

those on sea as those on shore, food for the mind, that is, religion, can be no less so. Not, I say, to content myself with these general truths, I would go on to show you some especial reasons why you should cultivate true piety.

And (1.) on account of the dangers to which you are exposed.

Life is uncertain to all, and therefore every man is bound to consider his latter end, and continually to live in the remembrance that "he knoweth not what a day may bring forth." But they "that occupy their business in great waters," and particularly they who, to the uncertainties of the sea, add the probabilities of death attached to a service which subjects them to war, are pre-eminently called upon to "prepare to meet their God." How many who began life with hopes as fresh and blooming as those to whom I address myself, have now entered on their final state! Their voyage, with all its calms and storms, is over! They have either, impenitent and careless, been dashed against the rocks of perdition; or, having lived to God, have come "to their desired haven," and sat down amid the joys of immortality! And O how awful must it be, to be in shipwreck or in battle without one solid hope for eternity! To know that any instant may carry the soul, all unprepared, before the tribunal of an angry God! To feel that he who has had a right to our service in life, and who, moreover, has invited the sinner in the most tender manner to come to him, but who has been despised and insulted, is now about to become the avenger of our iniquities through the changeless ages of futurity! Surely men who are exposed to these things ought, with especial earnestness, to enter upon the duties of religion. Yea, if there be a person on earth who, more than all others, is bound to attend to the state of his soul, it is he who puts forth in the fragile vessel, and expects to encounter the roughnesses of a seaman's life. I have a friend in England who, in early years, was on the point of entering the army. He went to visit an aged female relative previously to his taking up his commission and commencing his military career. His relation availed herself of an opportunity of speaking to him in private. After congratulating him on the honorable profession he had chosen, she said, "You are now about to become a soldier, and expect, of course, soon to be engaged in the active duties of your calling." He acknowledged that he did, and added some expression to the effect that he had not made choice of the service of arms under the wish of passing his days in carelessness and indolence. She replied, "You have then, doubtless, considered the uncertainty of life attached to it; you have reflected that, with extreme suddenness and with little opportunity for serious thought, your soul may be demanded of you. Are you fit to die?" The subject in this view had never struck his mind. He was of a gallant spirit, and was quite ready to take up with the usual probabilities of arms; but *fit to die* he was not! *considerate of eternity* he was not! *watchful over his own heart* he was not!

The question cleaved to him. He felt its reasonableness. So seriously did it work within him, that he gave up his martial thoughts, and has now become one of the most devoted and courageous * ministers in my native land. I mention this not to lead any to the abandonment of their duties,—there must and should be varieties in the avocations of men,—but because I would impress on your minds the importance, *in your calling*, of sincere piety ; and because I am sure no man is fitted for danger and death but he who has had the courage to consider the events of things, and in the season of calmness and reflection has calculated his state in reference to eternity.

(2.) We pass on to another reason why seamen should be religious, viz. because *they* are peculiarly liable to temptations.

How many are the snares laid at every port and in every town for the unwary sailor. What evils, too, lie in his way at sea from his exposure to the conversation of careless and immoral companions ; and how often is he deprived of those essential blessings—the administration of the word, and sacraments of the LORD. What, then, can keep him from falling beneath this variety of allurements? What, especially, can preserve the youth from the seductions of bad company, the ill effects of profaneness, and all the darts which Satan aims at him to destroy his soul, but true religion? Yes, would you, who are young, be held back from sin and misery—would you, who are of maturer years, be preserved in or return to the paths of peace—would you not make shipwreck of all hopes of heaven, you must earnestly cultivate a principle of true piety of heart and life! Nothing else can keep you from falling—nothing else will give you a quiet conscience—nothing short of this can make the weapons of the enemy of souls fall powerless from you, or render you victorious in that conflict in which defeat is shame and wo eternal. The simple principle which preserved Joseph's steps should be yours, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And just in proportion to the number and strength of your temptations have you need of devotedness to the service of your heavenly Master.

But, (3.) a third reason for a sailor's being religious suggests itself. All men judge more by practices than by professions.

* There is a *moral* as well as an *animal* courage. The latter prompts to deeds of heroism, and causes persons to look with calmness on bodily danger. The former is that noble and elevated spirit which strengthens a man to the right discharge of moral duty; renders him superior to reproaches and ridicule for the sake of truth, and leads him to act in obedience to the commands of GOD, though the whole world should be against him. This was the sentiment which enabled the apostles to speak with boldness in the name of CHRIST, in spite of persecution and contempt :—this upheld the martyrs while suffering torture and death for the cause of religion. Would that every young man would consider the importance of moral as well as of animal courage. But are there not many who would boldly rush into battle, or brave the midnight tempest on the sea, who yet would quail beneath a comrade's sneer, and give up their fealty to GOD rather than bear a name of offence on its account. Let such reflect that they have not yet attained the proper dignity of their rational nature.

This is particularly the case with the Heathen in respect of Christianity. Of many things indeed they are ignorant ; but, in observing the faults of nominal Christians they are sufficiently quick-sighted. When ministers go to distant countries preaching the doctrines of salvation, they are usually met with the remark, "See how your own people live. If, as you say, your religion be good, why does it not make those professing it better ? How is it that the mass of your seamen are so ungodly, and that they sometimes commit actions of which we ourselves would blush to be guilty ?" Such, alas ! brethren, is the case and what a disgrace is it to the Christian name ; nay, what a hinderance of the blessed cause of the Gospel, and what a means of ruining thousands of immortal souls ! Sailors have it in their power to be most important helps in spreading the knowledge of salvation throughout the world. Going, as they do, from place to place, they might every where tend to the removal of prejudice, and to the leading men to embrace the truth. Could Christian ministers only say, "Observe the effect of the Gospel on the lives of our people," as well as, "Hear what we preach ;" it would not be long before the nations would be delivered from the bondage of Satan, and would possess a hope full of immortality. O ! that they who visit distant countries would think of this ! What has been your conduct in the regions you have visited ? Have you reason to praise God for having enabled you to walk faithfully before him in the sight of strangers, or have you thought your situation gave you an opportunity of indulging unseen in iniquity ? Alas ! what an account will many a voyager have to give of his example among the ignorant and deluded. Let the thought of your responsibility in this respect sink into your minds. Now, God calls you to be, in a manner, a fellow-worker with him ; attend to the appeal. Who can estimate the blessing the altered conduct of professing Christians may produce upon mankind ?

(4.) The last motive I would mention to induce you to cultivate religion, is, that this alone can make you really happy.

It is not the bitter pleasure of sin—it is not carelessness, profaneness, lewdness, and drunkenness—it is not the visiting distant lands, nor the enjoyment of delicious climates—it is not the calm of indolence, nor the flush of victory—nay, it is not even the sweets of the most tranquil domestic life that can give you solid and lasting peace. Would you obtain this blessing, you must seek it in the way in which the ALMIGHTY has appointed it to be found. Yes, you must open your hearts to true religion. Without piety, not earth's richest gifts nor its highest honors can profit. With it the storm is calmed—the roar of battle hushed—the most distant country becomes a home—the silent ocean a temple of the LORD—death itself the gate of life. O my friends ! would you possess the secret of all wisdom, all peace, all glory, you must seek it in those things which God has revealed for your soul's good. You cannot find it elsewhere

You can alone be safe in life and happy in death by considering in what religion really consists in order to your becoming the possessors of it.

Thus much as to the necessity of religion, and its excellency for your particular cases. Of this I hope you are convinced. Attend, then, while I briefly set forth,

II. What a sailor's religion should be.

This is no less important than our former point; for while some would persuade themselves that religion to *them* is not needful, others make such errors respecting it, that their minds remain in doubt, and they lose all the comfort, if not the benefit of piety.

Religion does not consist simply in wishing no harm to others, nor in casual regret for known faults, nor in general resolutions of amendment; it is not self-righteousness, nor fanaticism; it is not conviction, merely, nor head-knowledge; it is not a sudden and vanishing impression, nor the neglect of the duties of our station under the pretence of sanctity. It is something far better than all these.

It is (1.) the living in the fear and love of God.

The ALMIGHTY, as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, demands of us homage and obedience. What can be so reasonable as to fear him who is ever at hand, attending to our thoughts, words, and actions; who can, whenever he shall please, remove us from earth; who will, certainly, bring us before his judgment-bar; and on whose will our eternal condition depends? And then, as to loving him, surely we have but to consider his goodness to us as to our temporal lot, and his grace in respect to our souls; his forbearance toward us notwithstanding our provocations, and his treasures of mercy for penitent sinners; his having sent his dear Son to die for our offences, and his offer of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us for duty; his protecting care of us in the present life, and his promises of heaven in the life to come;—to see our obligations to love him—to feel that we are bound by the ties of gratitude to delight in the service of so gracious a friend. Here, then, is the first principle of a sailor's religion, or indeed of the religion of any man, the living in the fear and love of God. Let persons say what they will about a good heart, and the not wishing any evil to others; nothing will bear the scrutinizing gaze of the Lord our God, "whose eyes are a thousand times brighter than the sun," but the desire and endeavor to fear and love him.

And, brethren, were it not for our corrupt heart, for a seducing world, and the temptations of Satan, we *should* thus regard our Almighty Parent. Sin would be an astonishment to us; the least approach to it would be our sorest grief. But, unhappily, we have fallen! Our father Adam transgressed, and we all inherit his sinful nature, and have, by continual acts of personal rebellion, departed from these holy affections. We have forgotten that "God is a Spirit," and have neglected "to worship him in

Spirit and in truth." We have broken his holy day. We have allowed pride, prejudice, passion, and ungodliness to rule within us. Where is the person who must not acknowledge, in the words of our confession, "I have erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep, I have followed too much the devices and desires of my own heart, I have offended against thy holy laws, I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and I have done those things which I ought not to have done, and there is no health in me." What need, then, have we of repentance, and of a humble and contrite mind! Here, therefore is (2.) another point to be attended to in religion. Yes, an earnest examination of ourselves to see wherein we have offended, a true sorrow for sin, an uncompromising desire to be delivered from it, are among the earliest symptoms of piety. And whoever is indulging a spirit of self-righteousness, thinking lightly of transgression, or saying in justification of himself, "I am not so culpable as others," is deceiving his own heart. He has yet to enter in at the strait gate of humiliation. The path of piety has not begun to be trodden by him.

(3.) Another feature in true godliness is a simple faith in CHRIST as the Saviour of mankind.

Had any one been entirely holy from his youth up, that man might be saved by the law. But as all have sinned, all need the application of the Redeemer's blood to their consciences; all must be washed in "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Repentance is not restitution. Sorrow for transgression cannot *of itself* remove its guilt and punishment. Hence arose the necessity for a Saviour. Behold, therefore, the Lord JESUS CHRIST crucified for us on Calvary, and now, from his heavenly throne, saying, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out!" Nor is this all. Since our nature is perverse and corrupt, and that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," we must, would we possess the favor of God, be renewed unto holiness. The Divine Spirit offers his aid for this work of grace on our souls. He strives within us by his monitions; he teaches us what we should do; and fights against our lusts. To attend to his suggestions, to follow out conviction, to determine to pursue at all hazards the way of life, to rise above the frowns and flatteries of a false world,—these things are evidently our duty. To know him is wisdom; to obey him, peace. And, as all knowledge of redemption is contained in the Scriptures, a further part of religion consists (4.) in the study of these lively oracles. What a blessing is it to possess the divine word, and what a happiness to love it, and to act upon it! Do you want direction—the Bible is the best guide: pardon—it informs you of the means thereof: strength and consolation—here is their proper source: heaven—it tells you how you may arrive there. The Scriptures are the well from which the wisest men have always drank. They contain the waters of peace and salvation; and none ever, in a humble and teachable frame

applied to them, but they were made wiser and better. The word of God stoops likewise to the most ignorant, nor may any aver that they cannot understand the path to happiness when they hear such sayings as these—"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Faith without works is dead, being alone." "Without holiness no man shall see the LORD." Connected with the obligation of reverently studying the word of God, is that of attending on the means of grace. The seaman, who would cherish true piety, will value such opportunities as golden hours vouchsafed amid the avocations of life, to make him rich for eternity. Whenever, then, either on ship-board or on shore, divine service is performed, and circumstances permit, he will be found uniting with sincerity in the prayers of the congregation, and receiving with the humble desire of improvement, the instructions of the Scriptures and of the clergyman. He will also seriously consider the nature and objects of the holy sacraments; and, remembering that "baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour CHRIST, and to be made like unto him;" and that the Lord's supper has been "ordained as a pledge of the Redeemer's love, and for a continual remembrance of his death to our great and endless comfort." The devout sailor will desire to unite himself with the Church, or, if united, to *continue* in her fellowship, by maintaining her communion, and by a holy walk unto his life's end. He may, indeed, be exposed to difficulties from such a course; he may meet with scoffs from the infidel and the profane; but, in the act of pursuing it his soul will be strengthened and refreshed. The ordinances themselves will confer a peace and joy "which the world can neither give nor take away."

(5.) Thus far have I spoken of a seaman's duty toward God. But our heavenly Father requires these things in us that we may rightly demean ourselves toward our fellow-men. He who really loves God, cannot but love his neighbor also. The proper effects of all genuine devotion are gentleness, kindness, forgiveness, obedience, uprightness, honesty, chastity, sobriety. Let none boast the possession of religion who do not exhibit these fruits of the Spirit. The life is the great point. No man is in the right course who is not seeking to perform his duty to his Maker; but, then, no one ever aims at this without the consequences being visible in his behavior toward his fellow creatures. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for *this is the law and the prophets.*"

Happy, indeed, would the world become were all persons actuated by this rational, elevated piety,—this true love to God and man,—this humble spirit,—this earnest faith in the Saviour,—this prayerful, heavenly temper. Let me urge you, my friends, to consider this subject. What has been said applies in a mea-

sure to every one ; but to those who “ see the works of the LORD and his wonders *in the deep*,” I more especially address myself. May you be brought to reflect on your present state ! Are you desiring this religion or not ? You are on the voyage of life ; how soon it may be over who can tell ! Whither, then, are you directing your course—to heaven, or to hell ? Turn not aside from the question. Delay not on so important a matter. If you have but too much reason to fear you are out of the way, O ! seek *now* the path of peace. *Now* God calls you by his grace ; soon he may only be revealed to you in his terrors !

But are you really desiring Heaven, and aiming at its attainment. Beware lest any thing allure you from the pursuit. The cares and pleasures of the world, the wiles of Satan, and the suggestions of an evil heart, stand as so many foes to the Christian, and continually present obstacles to his entrance into glory. Pray, therefore, with earnestness and perseverance, with faith and simplicity of mind, to be rendered victorious over them. You will not long have to strive. CHRIST is a faithful, almighty, and ever-present friend. Determine, then, in his strength, to fight the good fight of faith ; he will not leave you unto eternity. In fine, cleave closely to the Scriptures ; read a portion of them daily ; waiting on the Spirit's teaching. Take *them* and not *the world* for your rule. Mind neither the ridicule nor the reproaches of the wicked. Endeavor to approve yourselves in the sight of God. Let all men, by your exemplary, faithful, and benevolent conduct, “ take note of you, that you have been with JESUS.” You will never have occasion to regret his service. “ He will here guide you with his counsel, and after that receive you to glory.”

THE END.



THE

CROSS OF CHRIST.

“ For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus CHRIST, and him crucified.”—1 Cor. ii. 2.

NEW-YORK :

NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY ;



THE
CROSS OF CHRIST.

IN an early part of his first Epistle to the Church at Corinth, the apostle Paul says,

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save **JESUS CHRIST**, and him crucified.”

It is natural that we should wish to know, what could be the reason which induced the Apostle to form this determination.

St. Paul, even if we were to regard him merely as an individual man, without reference to his authority as an inspired apostle, was not likely to have come to any conclusion which affected so deeply the character of his future ministry, without much consideration and sufficient reason; and if we had heard of such a resolution made at any time under similar circumstances, and by such a man, we should have felt it our duty to inquire into the causes which had led to it.

But I would ask you, reader, to accompany me in the inquiry at present, not merely as if it were a subject of common investigation, or for the sake of satisfying an idle curiosity; I would ask you to do it from higher motives, and with a higher end in view; I would ask you to do it, for the purpose of ascertaining the mind of the Spirit; for the purpose of learning from these words of the Apostle, what was that view of the Gospel which he determined to take up to the exclusion of every other; as being according to his judgment most adapted to the case of men; best suited to the state of his hearers; most profitable to salvation.

This, then, is the subject before us;—a subject deserving and claiming our most serious attention, and a subject which I pray that the **HOLY SPIRIT** may enable us to feel and to understand as we ought!

The first remark, however, which I would now make, should be, that if this seems to be a narrow or a meagre scheme of divinity, the Apostle was not led to adopt it from deficiency of knowledge, or from the want of other resources for a powerful and effective ministry. Of all the apostles of our **LORD**, St. Paul was most amply prepared for the work of the ministry, by previous education, as well as by imparted powers. “Brought up,” as he says of himself, “at the feet of Gamaliel;”^{*} “taught

^{*} Acts xxii. 3.

according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers ; ' " having profited likewise in the Jews' religion, above many of his equals in his own nation ; " * mighty, like Apollos, in the Scriptures ; conversant, as he shows himself in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in all that hidden wisdom which was exercised on the types of the Jewish law ; speaking with tongues, as he says to the Corinthians, more than they all : thus instructed, and thus gifted, St. Paul could never have been at a loss for topics of illustration or argument to those whom he addressed ; and whether he was called to appeal to a Jewish audience, and to prove to them from the prophets that Jesus was the CHRIST ; or whether, when standing before a Heathen tribunal, he was obliged to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come ; proving from the general truths which they admitted, the particular truths which they neglected, or were unwilling to receive ; in either case, he appeared a scribe instructed to the kingdom of heaven, bringing out of his treasure things both new and old ; and master of every means by which the mind might be awakened, enlightened or converted. And still, on this occasion, an occasion when more than ever he might have seemed to need every subsidiary means ; when he was about to commence his ministry among the learned and acute Corinthians, he announces his determination to reject every other topic which might have seemed likely to attract them, and says, " I determined to know nothing among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. "

If on this occasion, then, we find him professedly limiting his ministerial labors to one single doctrine, even to the exclusion of all those other topics which the Gospel offered, we must be sure that this did not arise in his case from poverty of resources, from want of power to comprehend or from want of power to enforce the other doctrines which belong to the Gospel ; and therefore, that if he selected this view of the Gospel in preference to others, or used it to the exclusion of others, he did so, either from feeling that it comprehended all the rest, or else that it exceeded all the rest in fitness to the case before him.

II. Again we must also remark, that his choice in this respect was not influenced by an idea that this doctrine would be peculiarly agreeable to his hearers. St. Paul was not a man to have neglected such an advantage, if it had been offered to him. " He who to the Jews became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews ; who was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. " † He, who with all his firmness, and all his zeal for truth, never seems to have wounded a prejudice wantonly ; and always yielded as much to the feelings of his hearers as he could, without compromising the truth ; he would not have neglected an opportunity of pressing a view of doctrine which he knew was likely to be received with willingness, and would

* Gal. i. 14.

† 1 Cor. ix. 22.

gladly have availed himself of any access which was open to their affections. But on this occasion his conduct was obviously the reverse. The doctrine which he preached, and which he was determined to preach, to the exclusion of others, was peculiarly offensive to his hearers. It disappointed the expectations of some. It wounded the pride of others. It exhibited the Gospel in the exact form and manner against which they were most bitterly prejudiced, and seemed to multiply obstacles in the way to their believing.

"The Jews," says he, "require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach CHRIST crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, foolishness."* Instead of offering to the Jew that view of the Gospel which might flatter his national prejudices; instead of presenting it to the Greek in a form which might meet his ideas of moral refinement, we preach it, says he, in the way which is offensive to them both,—in the way which shocks the pride of one, and disgusts the taste of the other.

It surely must have been some great and powerful reason which induced the Apostle, on this occasion, to deviate so widely from his usual course; to neglect those feelings which in general he consulted so carefully; and to press that view of truth in particular, which he knew would be offensive to so many of his hearers. This, at least, we may collect for certain, that the preference given to this style of preaching, did not arise from the idea that it was likely to be more acceptable than others to his hearers.

But if it was neither deficiency in other means, nor an idea that this view of doctrine was agreeable to his hearers, which induced the Apostle to adopt it as peculiarly his own; our next subject of inquiry might be, what there was in this doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified, which decided the Apostle's choice; which led him to prefer this to every other plan which his mind was capable of conceiving, and induced him to confine his ministry to a subject, which above every other that could be named, was likely to offend the prejudices of the great body of his hearers.

He seems to have done this, if we must assign the reason, from a conviction that this single doctrine contains the most powerful and affecting exhibition of the two truths, which it is most necessary for men to know;—the evil of sin; the goodness of God:—the misery of man as a sinner; the grace of God as manifested in his redemption.

These two truths form the very foundation of religious knowledge. In these are involved all the mystery of godliness; the whole plan and scheme of the Gospel dispensation. But these are never so fully shown, never so powerfully taught as when

* 1 Cor. i. 22, 23.

they are proved at the foot of the cross of **JESUS CHRIST**, and when every fact is substantiated by reference to that.

They may be shown, no doubt, they may be proved on other grounds, and by a different chain of argument.

A man may be convicted of sin, and the evil of sin may be demonstrated by the word of the law, brought home to his heart and his conscience, and by the consequences which the law has pronounced on sin.

The goodness of God may be shown, clearly shown, and beautifully illustrated, by dwelling on the works of creation, and the evidences of love and mercy which appear in every part of the divine administration. But how weak the proof, how faint the conviction produced in either of these cases, compared with that which is drawn from the cross of **CHRIST** ! How light the impression which is left on the mind, in either of these modes, compared with that which is left by the blood of **CHRIST** ; compared with that which is produced by the sight of his sufferings, and of those sufferings as borne for the very individual who beholds them.

The reasoning which tends to show a general guiltiness in human nature, which makes the conviction of each the conviction of all, but which does not shock the pride by any particular statement, nor alarm the conscience by any personal application, may be heard with approbation, may be admitted without reluctance. The truth in itself is too obvious to be disputed ; and as it only makes a general charge, and a charge, therefore, which does not bring the accusation home to any individual in particular, it does not seem necessary to contend against it. The mind is prepared to receive it, by familiarity with the world. And if the real character of sin, its guilt, and its aggravation, is made to consist in this, that it is a transgression of the law, the sinner looks round on a world of transgressors ; hears every mouth confessing the same fact which is charged against himself ; and feels that he does not compromise his tranquillity, by yielding to an accusation which applies equally to every one around him, and which creates no disturbance in the minds of those who admit it.

The case is the same with regard to the goodness of God. In general statements of this truth, all the world will acquiesce ; and while it is taught in general, as equally applicable, and equally applied to all ; while its evidence is drawn and its proof founded on facts, in which all share alike, it creates little feeling in individuals. Its magnitude may then be expanded ; its vastness may be described in any language which you choose ; every quality which can create admiration or wonder may be included in the view : and still it shall produce no effect on any, because it equally rests on all. In such a case, what is the love of God but a weight which, like the weight of the atmosphere, seems to press upon none, because it is diffused over all—within us as well as without us ; supporting us from within, as well as

pressing upon us from without ; a weight, under which we were born ; a weight, under which we have always lived, and without which we could not live at all ; acknowledged therefore by all, but felt by none ; admitted to be what nobody can support, and yet not perceived by those who live under its pressure, and who move and act unconscious of their burden. Such is the love of God, when viewed in general as the common inheritance of mankind. Such is that idea of the goodness of God, which we draw from the works of nature !

But we also know that that goodness may be exhibited in a way which nothing can resist ; and just as that weight of the atmosphere, which to us at present seems as nothing, and is considered as nothing, may be made to descend upon a body, with a power which shall fix it to the earth ; so is there a way in which the love of God may be presented, which shall crush the hardest heart, bring down every high imagination, and every thing that exalteth itself against God ; and overwhelm the soul with a burden of obligation which it cannot endure. Nor need I say that this is the evidence which is drawn from the cross of CHRIST ; and must I add, that this is the circumstance which renders the cross of CHRIST a subject so offensive to the world at large. It is not the humiliation which it implies, on the part of our Redeemer, that men object to. It is not the trial of reason that they shrink from. No, my brethren, the thing that alarms, the thing that offends them is the evidence, the overwhelming dazzling evidence of the love of God, which bursts from the cross of CHRIST. This threatens their security in sin ; this frightens their self-love ; this awakens their resistance : this makes them tremble at an argument which they feel would be irresistible, if it ever was admitted ; this makes them shudder at the conclusion which they see must follow, and makes them dread to hear the preacher say, "Beloved, if God so loved us,"—ought not we to love Him in return.

But just in proportion as men are unwilling to admit these truths in their real dimensions, and in their proper application, is the necessity that they should be impressed ; that some way should be found, and that when found it should be used, in order to carry conviction to the heart. And therefore, if the cross of CHRIST exhibits more clearly than any thing else the evil of sin and the goodness of God, the misery of man as a sinner, and the love of God in his redemption ; then let JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified, be made the subject of preaching, till every heart shall feel the reality of its own lost state, and every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let us turn, then, now to consider the way in which this doctrine contributes to this end, and see first how the evil of sin is proved by the cross of CHRIST.

There are other ways, no doubt, by which the same fact may be proved, and by which a conviction—a deep and melancholy

conviction, of the evil of sin, may be formed upon the mind. We may go to the law, and may prove to man by the testimony of commandments broken, and duties unfulfilled, that he is a sinner. If blinded by self-love, he endeavors to resist the proof, takes shelter under the letter of the law, and deceiving himself by the appearances of a decent and correct life, says, "All these things have I kept from my youth;" we may proceed to experiment, and try whether his obedience has been that hearty and spiritual obedience, which is due to Him, who requires that they who worship Him, do it in spirit and in truth; and with which alone the demands of law can be satisfied. In order to assist the search, we may pour the light of the Gospel on the darkness of the natural mind, and use the record of mercy to convict the sinner of blind and desperate ingratitude. Having done this, we may appeal to the voice of conscience; we may refer to the consequences of sin scattered through the world at large; we may point to the multiplied wretchedness and misery which sin has entailed upon mankind; and may draw our proof of its malignity from facts which all the world is agreed in deploring.

In this way we may convince the understanding; we may constrain a sullen and reluctant acknowledgment of the evil of sin, and of the guilt of the individual; but still we may not have reached the heart of the sinner; and after having driven the man from one refuge of lies to another, and carried conviction into all, we may see him at last settle down into cold-blooded indifference, acknowledging himself a sinner without the change of a feature, or an expression of compunction; and must end by fearing, that after all we have done, the last state of that man is worse than the first.

But we must feel that it is also in our power to adopt a different method for this purpose. We may adopt that which was followed by the Apostle, and instead of proving the evil of sin from the holiness of that law which it has broken, or the miserable consequences which it has produced; we may prove it from the price which was paid for its redemption; we may show it, "in JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified."

We may point to Him and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." We may say, Behold those wounds; that head crowned with thorns; that visage, once adored by angels, and now marred more than any man: Behold Him, once pronounced to be the well-beloved of the Father; now rejected of men, smitten of God, and afflicted; his body stretched upon the cross, numbered with the transgressors; his spirit fainting under the weight of suffering: Hear his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" See this,—hear this, thou sinner, and when thy heart reproaches thee with sin, when conviction is brought home to thy conscience, and thou confessest that thou art a sinner; then know that for thy sake all this suffering was borne; know, that for thy sake, for the purpose of obtaining the pardon of these sins

which thou hast committed, in which thou hast lived, and delighted, and rejoiced ; the Son of God came down from heaven, divested himself of all his glories, endured this shame, submitted to these agonies ; that thou through his sufferings might escape the punishment thy sins deserved. "He was wounded for thy transgressions." "He was bruised for thy iniquities." "The chastisement of thy peace was upon him!"

We may say this ; and when the heart begins to melt, and the tears to flow ; when the sinner, astonished and surprised at the disclosure of facts which overwhelm his comprehension, begins to tremble at what he hears ; we may then say, yes, this is sin. This was the work of sin. This is the effect of sin. Sin rendered this necessary ; for sin could not have been pardoned, unless its punishment had been borne ; and who but CHRIST could have borne, what the sinner sees and learns in his sufferings was to be its penalty ?

But there is another point to be considered, in order to complete our view of religion. We must not only understand the real evil of sin, we must not only learn its intolerable guilt from the exhibition of its effects in CHRIST—we must also learn the goodness of God, the goodness of Him who decreed, who accomplished the salvation of the sinner. And what might seem surprising, if we did not know the ways in which God works ; the same doctrine which proves the misery of the sinner, has in it the highest evidence of the goodness of God.

In JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified, the Apostle found an evidence of the guilt of sin which nothing else could offer ; and he proved the extent of the sinner's loss, by showing the price which was paid for his redemption. In the same object he also found an evidence of God's goodness and mercy, such as the whole world had never seen before. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us."†

And, compared with this, what is the evidence of the love of God in general ? That He gives us rain and fruitful seasons, "filling our hearts with food and gladness." That He continually bestows, from the immensity of his resources, that which is necessary for us, and which is not needed by himself ? But what is this, compared with the gift of his own Son, of his only begotten, his well beloved ? And of that Son, given to man, not to be worshipped, not to be glorified by the willing obedience of loving subjects ; but to be persecuted, insulted, crucified !

Let us not depreciate the greatness of that bounty which forms the character of God's providence toward us. Let us not be insensible to the mercy which spares a sinful world, which returns good for our evil, and shames our ingratitude by daily

* John iii. 16.

† Rom. v. 8.

pouring blessings on us to which we have no claim. But while we see and adore the marks of love incomprehensible, in the works of Providence, let us not forget that all this is but like the dust of the balance, compared with that love which is exhibited in the cross of CHRIST.

If God were to meet the wildest wish which covetousness ever framed ; if he were to give us all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them ; what would that be for him to give, compared with what he has already done in giving his Son to die for sinners. Kingdoms there are many ; and their perishable glory is but like the glory which covers the fields with the prodigality of vegetation in the spring. But He had but one Son,—and he gave Him,—and Him too, not for the righteous ; not to offer fresh joys to those who had honored and adored Him previously ; but for the unrighteous and the sinner ; gave Him to die for all, even for the very wreck and refuse of this fallen world ; that lost as we might be, there should not be one of Adam's race who might not be able to find in the merits of CHRIST a plea for justification, a ground of hope and comfort for his soul.

Here, then, we see why the Apostle preached JESUS CHRIST and him crucified, to the exclusion of every other topic. He found in this, that evidence of the love of God which he wished to force upon the converted and humbled sinner ; and he knew that that very cross of CHRIST which had awakened godly fear and godly sorrow, should next heal the wounds which it had made, and pour godly joy and godly affection over the believer's spirit.

Nor need I add, that such must be the view that you, my Christian reader, must be taking, or that this is the rule under which your study of the Gospel should be carried on.

You wish to know your own state ! No inquiry can be more reasonable ; no knowledge more necessary, in order to obtain solid and enduring comfort. But where will you prosecute the study, and by what rules shall your inquiry be directed ?

If you go to the world, and ask the opinion of men, they will tell you, perhaps, that you are a sinner, just as all men are ; and your heart will infer, that that which is the case of all, need not excite much uneasiness in any ; and that the conviction which produces no anxiety in others, may therefore be admitted with indifference by you.

The law itself, if you sit down to its study, will tell you that you are a sinner ; but it can not, it will not tell you half of the aggravation of sin—half of the sinfulness of sin. It tells you, for instance, that the soul that sinneth must die. You infer the nature of the crime, from the consequences pronounced upon it ; and you think that that which is recompensed by the common lot of all men, is but the common character of human nature.

You may consider the consequences of sin, and deduce the

evil that there is in it from the evil it produces, from the misery it occasions. But while you see much that is dreadful, much that awakens horror and disgust; you will also see sin, in other forms, and under different circumstances, not only endured by the world, but caressed by the world, and admired. You will see it ministering to the pleasures of life, adding zest to its enjoyments. You will see it brilliant in its features; playful in its actions; in common acceptance and to all appearance harmless. You will thus see it universally practised, universally defended, till you gradually come to the conclusion, that it is not the transgression, but the excess, which makes the act of sin to be so formidable.

But go to the cross of CHRIST, pursue your study there, in meditation and in prayer, and you will gain a different notion of the guilt of sin. You will there see the real character of that sin which has death pronounced on it as its penalty, in seeing the real character of that death to which it has exposed mankind. You will there see that death is not the mere extinction of animal life, the cessation of movement and sense in an exhausted and suffering body, in a body which sometimes seems to rejoice in the event that puts an end to suffering. You will there see that that is not the death which the sinner has to fear, the death which he has challenged by his transgressions, and the death which he must look to meet. You will learn there that a very different sort of struggle is to be passed by the sinner, a very different sort of anguish to be borne, than that which closes the labors of the wasted body. You will there see, that death has a sting, a sting hidden from our observation in this world, but a sting which must be revealed, must be felt by those who are subject to its power. You will there see, for you may there trace in the sufferings of CHRIST how fierce must be the conflict which the soul will have to pass. His sweat of blood, his cry of anguish, his sense of desertion, these speak a stronger language than words can do, and tell the soul of sorrows unutterable, of pains incalculable, as included in the death of CHRIST; but all originating in sin, all belonging to sin, and all to be denounced on sin as its portion.

It is the same with the goodness of God! The world will talk to you, and will allow you to talk of his beauty, and his mercy, and his love. The world will refer you to the evidences of benevolent design scattered through creation. The world will talk of the goodness which clothes the fields with plenty; which lightens up the cheek with health; and which compels even forgetful and ungrateful man to make some acknowledgment of his Maker's bounty.

But go you to the cross of CHRIST, and while you see the well-beloved of the Father given up to sinners, dying the accursed death, and numbered with the transgressors; then say, for me this was done; for me and for my salvation. "In this

was manifested the love of God, that God sent his Son into the world to die for sinners."

It is by this that self-love is to be overwhelmed, that self-righteousness is to be conquered, and the sinful heart to be humbled before its God. But it is by this also, that the broken contrite heart is to be comforted ; that light and hope are to be poured into the depths of despair ; and that the humbled sinner shall be taught, that as "the heaven is high above the earth, so is God's mercy toward them that fear him." By this he is to learn to combat the misgivings and fear of his awakened mind, and to silence every doubt by the remembrance of that love which passeth knowledge ; saying at every moment of alarm, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ; how shall he not with Him also give us all good things."

Rock of ages ! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee ;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy side, a healing flood,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath, and make me pure.

Should my tears for ever flow,
Should my zeal no languor know,
This for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and thou alone ;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eye-lids close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,—
Rock of ages ! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee !

ON

HEARING THE WORD;

A Sermon.

BY THE RT. REV. SAMUEL SEABURY, D.D.

NEW-YORK :

NEW YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY ;



THE MINISTRY.

Who is God's chosen priest ?
He, who on CHRIST stands waiting day and night •
Who traced His holy steps, nor ever cease^d,
From Jordan banks, to Bethpage height :

Who hath learn'd lowliness
From his LORD's cradle, patience from His cross ;
Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless ;
To whom, for CHRIST, the world is loss.

But who can e'er suffice—
What mortal—for this more than angel's task,
Winning or losing souls, Thy life-blood's price ?
The gift were too divine to ask,

But thou hast made it sure,
By thy dear promise to thy Church and Bride,
That thou, on earth, would'st aye with her endure,
Till earth to heaven be purified.

Where can thy seal be found,
But on thy chosen seed, from age to age
By thine anointed heralds duly crown'd,
As kings and priests thy war to wage ?

Then fearless walk we forth,
Yet full of trembling, Messengers of God :
Our warrant sure, but doubting of our worth,
By our shame alike, and glory awed.

Dread Searcher of the hearts !
Thou who didst seal, by thy descending Dove,
Thy servant's choice, O help us in our parts ;
Else helpless found to learn and teach thy love !

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*

ON HEARING THE WORD.

A SERMON,

BY SAMUEL SEABURY, D. D.

Late Bishop of Connecticut and Rhode-Island.

LUKE viii. 31.

Take heed how ye hear.

OUR SAVIOUR having explained the parable of the sower to his disciples, added that of the lighted candle; that they might understand his intention in communicating that knowledge to them was not that they should keep it to themselves, but that they should proclaim and teach it to others. The caution of the text follows, and is supported by a declaration which several times occurs in his instructions; "Take heed how ye hear: for whosoever hath" (so as to improve it to the purposes for which he hath it) "to him shall" more "be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."

The text, therefore, relates to the temper with which we hear religious instruction, especially from those who are appointed by God to dispense it to us. The admonition of our Saviour ought to convince us that it is a matter of serious importance; and the observation which every minister of CHRIST must make, that little apparent benefit arises from hearing sermons, will convince him that his admonition is not regarded as it ought to be.

Some part of the blame probably belongs to them whom God hath called to be public instructors in his Church. They, being men of like passions and infirmities with others, may not in every respect come up to their duty. They may be negligent in preparing themselves for the discharge of their office of preaching God's word to advantage. They may be careless and languid in the delivery of their discourses. Though no crime may stain their characters, their conduct may defeat the benefit of their public instruction. May God give them all grace to attend duly to their own conduct in these respects; for heavy will be their doom, if the preaching of the Gospel of God fail of its full effect through their fault!

But whatever may be the deficiencies of those who *preach* the Gospel, we have a right to expect more fruit from their labors.

such as they are, than we see produced. This must be the fault of THE HEARERS ; and it requires the consideration of their serious hours, and their earnest prayers to Almighty God, the giver of all grace, that they may correct it. The subject is important, and weighty consequences are dependent on it—the glory of God, the honor of our Redeemer, the prosperity of religion, their own future welfare, and the future welfare of others.

Such excuses as satisfy themselves are easily made by most people, when religion is concerned ; for when the accused is his own judge, his acquittal too generally follows of course. But whether those excuses, with which men satisfy themselves, will satisfy their final Judge, deserves their consideration. An apostle hath told us, “ If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”^a But righteous judgment will certainly be expected of us. If we might be allowed to change one word in the above cited text, and read, “ If we would *condemn* ourselves, we should not be *condemned*,” I conceive neither the propriety of the translation, nor the truth of Scripture would suffer by it.

Be, therefore, your own judges while I endeavor, in plainness and sincerity, to lead you to the true apprehension of what is contained in this important text,

“ *Take heed how ye hear.*”

I. It implies a disposition to attend to what is said, and be instructed by it.

To sit within the sound of the preacher’s voice, and hear his words without attending to them, can answer no good purpose. Thus hearing, you hear not, because you understand not. One design of preaching, is to instruct ; but if you understand not, this end of preaching, with regard to you, is defeated. Or, should the preacher’s view be to correct something amiss, to enliven your devotion, to refresh your memory, to call off your affections from the things of the world, and direct them to things above ; as to any advantage you will get, you might as well be in any other place, or employed in any other matter.

But possibly the preacher does not please you. His voice is coarse, or his manner uncouth, or his language inelegant, and you cannot command your attention. But, remember, the preacher is God’s minister to you, for your good. It is, therefore, your duty to hear him with attention and patience. To have the ears charmed, and the imagination delighted, may be very pleasing sensations : but, unless the understanding be informed, and the heart mended, these sensations might have as well been produced by a song, as a sermon ; and, in a general way, the impression would last as long in one case, as in the other.

I mean not to excuse any clergyman who indulges himself in an indolent, careless, or awkward manner in the pulpit. It is his duty to correct any habits of this kind, and to qualify himself to discharge the solemn office of preaching, with propriety. But

^a 1 Cor. xi. 31.

suppose, with his utmost endeavor, he should, as a preacher, fail to please you; still it is your duty, while you live under his ministry, to attend to his discourses, and get as much instruction from them as you can. Possibly some part of the fault may be in you:—a careless habit may be more to blame, than any defects in the preacher. At least, it would be worth the trial, whether continued exertion, on your part, to command your attention, would not wear off or lessen, what appeared disgusting in the preacher's manner.

Another excuse for inattention is, that the preacher tells you nothing that is new—nothing but what you knew before: And why should you be obliged to attend for half an hour, to hear only what you had often heard, and with which you were as well acquainted as your minister?

How, then, did you get your knowledge? If by preaching, why not continue that attention to a method of instruction, from which you have received so much benefit? If in any other way; is it no satisfaction to have your knowledge confirmed by discourses from the pulpit? Possibly, too, while you are inattentive, and your thoughts wandering, some sentiment may be delivered which would have pleased you; some duty in which you are deficient, enforced with motives you never thought of; some sin, in which you lived, reprov'd in a manner which would have affected you; some point of doctrine, in which you wanted instruction, explained; some text of Scripture, which you did not understand, set in a clear light: but through inattention you have lost the opportunity, and it may never again return to you.

Besides; though you may be so well informed as to need no instruction; is that the case with the whole congregation? Others may be ignorant; and you surely would not prevent their improvement. Set, then, a good example; and by your own attention, encourage attention in them. Some advantage may thereby accrue even to *you*. You may find your love to God enlivened, your faith quickened, your devotion warmed, your piety promoted, your benevolence heightened, and every good disposition animated, by the repetition of what you before knew full well. Why then will you, by inattention, preclude yourself from all chance of so great blessing?

Another cause of inattention is *levity*. Some persons have so much vivacity in their composition, and require such a perpetual change of objects to entertain them, that they cannot stay in any place, or converse on any topic, or engage in any matter long enough to receive instruction. All must be mirth, or they are unhappy. Brilliant sallies of imagination, lively repartees, jests, laughable merriment of any kind, constitute their whole enjoyment. There may be advantages in such a disposition with regard to this world. The little rubs of life affect not; and the heavy strokes of adversity are soon forgotten. But, to indulge such a disposition in church, is both ridiculous and wicked. Levity is no friend to consideration; no qualification for attending

to the interests of eternity. It kills devotion; it hinders divine contemplation, and closes the mind against instruction. Let the preacher have prepared ever so good a sermon; let him deliver it with ever so much propriety; in the midst of a serious argument, or of a pathetic exhortation, some whim strikes the fancy and must be communicated:—a whisper ensues; laughter follows; the whole pew is disturbed; and the minister hath composed, and preached in vain. If nothing worse, yet the occasional adjustment of the little ornaments of dress, observations on the appearance and behavior of others, and the treasuring up of remarks for future merriment, too probably are the employment of such persons through the whole sermon.

Another cause of inattention is the intrusion of worldly objects into the mind. While at church, the miser may be contemplating his wealth, or calculating his interest; the worldling laying plans for the prosecution of his business; the man of ambition contriving the exaltation of his dignity; the debauchee, the certain enjoyment of his pleasures. God grant there be no occasion for these remarks! Yet solicitude that you may reap the full benefit of that religious instruction which God hath provided for you, hath drawn them from me.

Let me now observe, that in order to make sermons profitable to you, it is not only necessary that you attend to them, but that you attend with a firm and honest resolution to believe and practise whatever you shall be convinced is your duty; and that the seriousness with which you attend be not dropped as soon as you leave the church. It ought to be continued, at least, long enough to give you time for reflection. This reflection ought to be recalled at proper intervals, that you may add to your stock of knowledge what you gained from the last sermon, and make it subservient to your growth in grace and in Christian virtues.

For this reason you ought not to return suddenly to the consideration of worldly business. What necessity requires must be regarded: but unnecessary attention to worldly objects, as soon as we leave the church, will distract the mind, and lessen the benefit you would otherwise receive from the instructions of the pulpit. Six days in the week our Creator hath given us, to provide for this life; the seventh he hath appropriated to the interests of eternity. We shall show our wisdom by regarding the institution of our Maker, and by not encroaching on a day which he hath blessed and sanctified to so important a purpose.

Far be it from me to recommend a sullen, gloomy behavior, to religious people. It is generally the child of pride and ignorance; the nurse of pceevishness and bigotry. I know no person who has a better right to be cheerful than the pious Christian. Only let him take care that his cheerfulness be innocent, and do not degenerate into levity; especially into such levity as shall lead him into improper behavior at church, or efface the good impressions he hath there received.

II. The text implies in it the duty of hearing sermons with an

open and candid heart; neither warped by prejudice against the preacher, nor by unreasonable partiality in his favor.

If the mind be barred by prejudice, or warped by partiality, the chance of obtaining instruction, or of having our good dispositions confirmed, will be much lessened. Prejudice will shut the ears and harden the heart against conviction. Partiality will incline us to receive doctrines which have no foundation in truth. The one will prevent our receiving instruction when offered to us; the other may make us a prey to delusion and error. Duty requires that we exercise candor, not that we resign ourselves to implicit belief. Judgment must be used, and discretion must guide it.

Fundamental principles of religion drawn from Holy Scripture, and from the catholic creeds and doctrines of the Church, together with approved maxims of holiness, will enable us to judge, if not with scholastic precision, yet with propriety, and with security to our faith and practice, both as reasonable men, and as Christians. It is not to be expected, nor is it required, that every Christian should be a casuist, or deeply skilled in controversial divinity: but it is expected that every Christian be an honest man, and receive truth and reject error, as far as his best judgment shall enable him to distinguish them.

A plain sermon in familiar language, seldom acquires the preacher any credit; never but *with good judges*. Every man is apt to think he could have composed as good a sermon himself. But if a preacher busy himself in endeavoring to explain the mysteries of religion,^a or to confute old heresies, or reconcile modern systems of divinity, or to distinguish between sin and duty, virtue and vice, and show how near they can come together without the one running into the other, there is a propensity in common hearers to applaud him. The vastness of his abilities, and the immensity of his learning are admired, merely because he *was not understood*. If such preachers gain applause; or if light, frothy discourses, hit off in soft words and flowing periods—smooth and cold as polished marble—be preferred to plain, solid, Christian doctrine, some preachers, it is to be feared, will be found, who will sacrifice their duty to their fame, their conscience to their profit, and will tickle your ears and please your imaginations, without much regard to your growth in grace or Christian knowledge.

Another ground of both prejudice and partiality with regard to preachers is this: Some religious people form to themselves a particular scheme of Christianity:—they understand its principles

^a There are, and there must be *mysteries*, that is, some doctrines in our religion which we cannot comprehend. The infinite nature of God is beyond the reach of our understanding. We have, from nature, no conception of spirit, or of spiritual objects, but by analogy with our own nature and the things of this world. Divine revelation, then, which concerns itself only with spirit and spiritual things, and is obliged to represent them to us by analogy, must have some things in it which to us are incomprehensible.

in a sense of their own :—they lay a great stress on some particular doctrine :—they use a peculiar set of phrases, and quote certain texts of Scripture, to both which they have affixed their own, peculiar meaning. Should a clergyman neglect their mode of expression ; or give a different interpretation of their texts ; or not lay weight enough upon their favorite doctrine ; they first suspect him, and then accuse him of teaching false doctrine. On the other hand, should the preacher use their style of expression quote their texts, and apply them in their way ; support their sentiments and build up their system ; they extol him to the skies ; the SPIRIT of GOD rests upon him ;—the words of salvation flow from his lips. But by what criterion do these people judge ? Evidently by the criterion of their own preconceived system. Appeals, I know, are always made to Scripture : but when a man puts his own construction on particular texts ; should that construction be false, the texts become *his* texts, and speak *his* sense, not the sense of Scripture.

The Scripture is the revelation of God to man, making known invisible and spiritual things by analogy drawn from things visible and corporeal. Its language must of necessity be figurative ; and, from its figure, as well as from the idiom of the language in which it was written, and the customs of the country where it was written, a degree of obscurity rests on it, which requires greater learning and abilities to clear up, than may be commonly apprehended.^b

Considered as a system of morality, the Bible is sufficiently plain to regulate the conduct of human life in all situations. As a divine revelation, making known and offering immortality and happiness to man in a future world, it is sufficiently plain to secure all the benefits of CHRIST's redemption to the faithful Christian. To this end, the study of the sublime points of theology, the knowledge of dark prophecies, of the mysteries of God's providence, and of the dispensations of his grace, are not necessary. It would be better if people would confine their attention more to matters of duty,—what their station in life requires of them ; and take their faith from the catholic creeds of the Church, in which the essential Christian doctrines of Scripture are comprised. It would also be well, if people of greater abilities and knowledge would be sure they themselves are right, before they form a decided judgment of the doctrines of their minister ; and that neither vanity, nor prejudice, nor pride have any influence to bias their determination. Some regard is due to the station of their minister in the Church, and to the relation he stands in to them ; and great regard is due to the peace, and order, and authority of the Church. Should their opinion of their minister be just, a private explanation may satisfy all their scruples : but

^b The Rev. William Jones, M. A. and F. R. S., in 1787 published a *Course of Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Holy Scriptures*, highly worth the attention of all Christians.

It ought to be the explanation of *a friend*, not the attack of *a disputant*. Let them, also, be careful that no petulance, nor obstinacy, nor censoriousness stain their conduct. If they be wrong, their case is dreadful. Prejudice, if their minister differs from them, precludes all opportunity of better information. If he coincides with them, prepossession hath laid a foundation on which he will build a superstructure of error and delusion.

Some people complain that their minister confines himself to discourses on dry *morality*, and never touches on any point of *Christian doctrine*. Others complain that their minister preaches constantly on intricate *doctrinal points*, and never says a word of *moral obligation*. When either of these charges is just, it ought to be corrected. When a minister confines himself to moral subjects, he gives occasion to suspicions that he does not believe, or does not understand, or lightly regards the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. If he never treats on Christian virtues, he furnishes occasion to censure, to say, that he is more solicitous to amuse his people with theoretic knowledge, than to form their manners.

The public service of the Church calls the minister to the consideration of particular Christian doctrines on particular days: at other times, she leaves, or rather invites him, not only to inculcate Christian principles, but to enforce the practice of Christian duty. Prudence will direct a clergyman to conform to this regulation, being careful to draw his morality from Christian sources, to establish it by Christian principles, and enforce it by Christian motives; and when Christian doctrines are under consideration, to point out their moral tendency, and show how well they are calculated to mend the hearts, and influence the conduct of men.

In some congregations there are people who are dissatisfied with their minister, and wish to be rid of him. While he is their minister, duty to God as well as to themselves, the order and peace of the Church, require that they submit to his ministry, that they duly attend the public service of the Church, and patiently listen to his discourses. If they should be such as do not entirely please them, they must be bad indeed if they receive no benefit from them.

Humility, without which the Christian character is not complete, by inspiring us with lowly sentiments of our own abilities, will dispose us to peace and quietness, which in the estimation of God are of more worth than all the subtleties of human learning. I know not a worse character (among the religious ones I mean) than a sour, captious, sermon-critic. No sermon pleases him, but in proportion as he can find fault with it. Too often, by mere dint of fault-finding, he collects a party who look up to him as to an oracle, and disperse abroad all his observations. Feeling his power to disturb the serious, and unsettle the weak, he becomes intoxicated with his own importance and spiritual attainments, till being lifted up with pride, he falls:—but God give

him repentance, and a better mind, that he may not “fall into the condemnation of the devil.” “*Take heed,*” therefore, “*how ye hear,*” and let your care be, at least, as much employed on your own temper and conduct, as on the conduct and preaching of your minister.

III. The text implies that we hear with faith in the goodness of God, and in the truth of his promises and threats.

One great end of preaching is to display the goodness of God to man, manifested in his creation, and more especially in his redemption from sin and death by JESUS CHRIST; in the hope of glory which he hath set before us, and the means of grace by which he enables us to obtain that hope. Unless you have this faith in the goodness of God, all these delightful topics will be urged on you in vain. You cannot love that goodness in which you do not believe; nor imitate that goodness which you do not love; nor be transformed into the likeness of that goodness which you do not imitate. And yet, our resemblance of God in goodness is made the foundation of happiness with him.

Equally necessary is it that we have firm faith in the truth of God; that we believe he will assuredly make good all his promises, and will execute his threats, unless by repentance, and faith in his mercy, we avail ourselves of the atonement of CHRIST for the forgiveness of our sins. On no other ground but that of your faith in the truth of God, can his promises be made the foundation of your hope, or his threats a motive to your repentance.

If, therefore, the goodness and truth of God are to be of any advantage to you in your Christian course, that advantage must come to you through your faith in them. Your duty, then, requires that, by frequent meditation, you strengthen your faith in the goodness of God expressed to you and to all men; in the truth of his promises to all faithful Christians; and in the certainty of his threats against the impenitent and disobedient. Thereby you will prepare yourselves to receive the full benefit of your minister’s discourses on those important subjects. Beyond every thing else, such meditations warm the heart with devotion to God, and with charity to man; they prepare it for the reception of Divine grace; they arm it with holy resolution, and they strengthen it against all temptations to sin.

IV. To your faith in the goodness and truth of God, add constant prayer and resignation of the heart to him; that is, a ready desire in all things to be conformed to his holy will.

The belief that God is our Creator and Redeemer; that he is good and hath provided all things necessary for our present and future happiness; that he is true and will fulfil every word that hath gone out of his mouth; is the foundation of the duty of prayer to him. If he is our Creator, he can help us in all difficulties. If he is good, he will do what is best for us. If his word is true, he will fulfil the gracious promises which he hath made. My subject obliges me to take notice of only one of these

promises—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." For, "if ye be- ing evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask him?"^a

This HOLY SPIRIT, CHRIST promised to his Church, and, as members of his Church, all Christians receive his heavenly influence. He is the principle of holiness; we are polluted and unholy through sin. He is the principle of strength; we are weak and unable to help ourselves. Most necessary, then, for us, is the presence and operation of this Divine Being, without whom we can do nothing that is good and acceptable to God. To our prayers and earnest entreaties God hath promised the precious gift of His presence—most necessary, therefore, it is, that we pray fervently and constantly for it. From this SPIRIT all good desires, and holy purposes, and just works proceed; from Him cometh every good and perfect gift. He disposeth the heart to the fear and service of God. He endueth it with attention, and a disposition to be instructed in the will of God; with candor to receive, and seriousness to consider, and resolution to believe and practise, whatever God shall declare to be our duty. Faith, and hope, and dependence on God proceed from him; prayer and resignation are the fruits of his work. He strengtheneth the heart against temptation; he supporteth it in affliction; he guideth it in prosperity. Pray earnestly, therefore, and constantly, for the presence and inspirations of this blessed SPIRIT. He is the author of all goodness in you: he is your whole security against evil.

And as you pray for his presence and holy gifts, be careful to obey his inspirations. They show themselves in the sensibility and love of goodness, in hatred and detestation of all that is evil. When you comply with the motions to goodness in your own heart, and turn from every thing which you know to be contrary to the will of God, you follow the motions of God's Spirit in you; and he will bless you, and will fulfil his gracious promise, "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

The business, therefore, of hearing sermons is not of that trivial nature, which many people suppose it to be. If we wish to make it conducive to our growth in grace, it must be accompanied with serious and patient attention, with a disposition to receive instruction in religious knowledge, with faith in the goodness and truth of God, and a determination to obey his will to our utmost ability.

I have gone upon the presumption, that the preacher faithfully does his duty, and proposes and explains the whole Gospel to you in the course of his sermons—that his manner be affectionate, and his language plain—that he neither carelessly nor wilfully perverts or neglects any doctrine necessary for you—that he

^a Luko xi. 9. 13.

confines not himself to some favorite system or doctrine, but opens to you the whole will of God concerning you, and leads you in it by a Christian and exemplary life. If he do not, he offends against the strongest obligations that can be laid on man, and heavy will be his condemnation from God!

Before I conclude, let me caution you against the fashionable prejudice in favor of Preaching, which prevails with most people who are not well instructed in the nature and design of the Church of CHRIST. I have no way to judge of the sentiments of people, but from their conduct and discourse. To judge by these, the whole duty of the minister lies in preaching; of the people in hearing. Accordingly, on prayer-days the congregations are very thin: but if a Rambler through the country notifies that he is *to preach*, though too ignorant to speak sense, and one who can only bawl loudly; he shall have his audience fully crowded. No inquiry is made into the qualifications of the preacher: whether he has been set apart to the work of the ministry according to the institution of CHRIST? or, whether he has taken up the business by his own authority? or, whether he has been ordained by those who had no more authority than himself? This shows that a great many people hear sermons with the same idle curiosity, with which they would hear a play. Remember, therefore, that Christians are united to God by being taken into covenant with him, and are united to one another by being members of his Church; that, this union can only be supported by the ordinances of his Church, all which are instituted by him for this very end. Joint prayers or social worship, and the participation of the sacraments, are, therefore, as necessary to eternal life, as hearing the word of God preached; and I will add, much more so, than hearing the word of God preached, without them.

Judge not the preacher; for he is thy judge.
 If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
 God calleth preaching, folly. Do not grudge
 To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.
 The worst speak something good. If *all* want sense,
 God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

He that gets patience, and the blessing which
 Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
 He that, by being at church, escapes the ditch
 Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
 He that loves GOD's abode, and to combine
 With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

Jest not at preachers' language or expression.
 How know'st thou but *thy* sins made him miscarry?
 Then turn thy faults and his into confession.
 GOD sent him, whatsoe'er he be. O, tarry,
 And love him, for his Master! His condition,
 Though it be ill, makes him no ill physician.

GEORGE HERBERT.

It is not many years since one of the gallant vessels of our navy floated proudly into the bay of New-York. The wind was blowing only in gentle breezes, which at one time pressed out the inviting canvas, and at another suffered it to hang useless by the side of the tall mast. At each successive expansion of the sail, the countenances of nearly all on board brightened; for then they were urged with new rapidity toward the city. Various, indeed, were the emotions experienced by the several individuals. Some were exulting in the prospect of leaving, for awhile, the toils and vexations they had endured upon the bosom of the ocean, and, in the hope of participating in the sinful relaxations, which the sailor too frequently seeks in a city life. Others were eagerly looking forward to the addition to their earthly goods, which would be made by the termination of the voyage; while a few were rejoicing at their entrance into the harbor, only because they were well pleased with a change. Among all these walked an individual in sullen silence, apparently unmoved by any thing around him. He saw that he was fast approaching a place which once had been as rich in comforts for him as for any of his companions. 'But now,' thought he, 'what interest has it to me? Die I must, and the ocean is as fit a place for my grave as the best churchyard in the city.'

The lieutenant, for that was his office, had the seeds of consumption effectually planted in his system. He had resisted the evidence of this fact until it would have been madness to resist it any longer; and he, who had been the life and delight of his friends, was now driven into opposite gloominess by the conviction that he was approaching his end. He had looked only to the world for comfort; and the hour had come in which the world had nothing to bestow: could he then, as a Christian, have looked beyond the things of time into the eternity he was fast approaching, how different would have been his feelings, how different would have been his hopes! But, alas! he had no hope beyond the grave, and wished to hear of no other life but this, for he was an infidel. In some unhappy hour, without sufficient examination, he had determined to disbelieve the Bible, and he mainly sought to be confirmed in his soul-destroying views.

In such a state of mind he arrived in the city; his assumed opinions denied him the greatest of all comforts, the comforts of religion; and with a heavy heart he sought in quiet lodgings retirement from the busy world. There every day pointed out to him more distinctly the ravages of disease; and, strange to say, every day he made a stronger effort to cling to infidelity



until, at last, he proceeded to such lengths as to avow, that if a clergyman should be brought to see him, he would bury his dirk in his bosom. Nor were his words stronger than his intentions, for he actually placed his weapon under his pillow, that he might be enabled to do as he had promised.

I will not detain the reader by describing the melancholy manner in which his days succeeded to nights, and his nights to days ; of whole hours spent in apprehensions, which, in spite of himself, fastened upon his mind ; and of pains which were only alleviated by the kind attention of the Christian friends in whose house he resided. Permit me to pass on to a later period in his existence.

The head of the family under whose care he remained had often doubted in his mind whether, notwithstanding the threat of the lieutenant, it was not his duty to inform some Christian minister of his state. He at length determined that it was. Accordingly he proceeded to the house of a neighboring clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and communicated to him, not only the illness of the young man, and his determination to listen to no Christian advice, but likewise his resolution to destroy any clergyman who might venture to converse with him.

The minister heard the account with interest, and after invoking the Divine direction, proceeded to the room of the dying stranger. The sick man had already obtained a hold upon his feelings, which none but the Christian can describe. He saw before him a frail human being about to be cut off from all connexion with the world, and consequently soon to be out of the reach of the saving influence of the Gospel: there was a soul more precious in the sight of God than this earth and all worlds beside ; and that soul was about to be cheated out of a happy immortality, by a system of unexamined doubts concerning the religion of JESUS CHRIST, the blessed Son and Messenger of God. In his first visit he did not deem it prudent to disclose the real purport of his errand, but confined himself to some general inquiries after his health, and some few items of advice concerning his comfort, suggested by his experience. However, the deep concern which he felt for the sick man displayed itself in all he said and did ; and he did not leave him until he was earnestly invited to repeat his visit. Twenty-four hours had not elapsed before he was again at the bedside of the young man. He asked after his health, and his voice proclaimed the interest he felt. "Sir," said the lieutenant, "your kindness overcomes me. I am not accustomed to see strangers take such an interest in my welfare." "I do, indeed, take an interest in your welfare," replied the minister, "and it is an interest far deeper than you suspect ; it is an interest founded in a knowledge that you have an immortal soul, and that it is in danger. God knows that I would sacrifice much to save your body ; but, O ! what would I not give to be the happy instrument of leading you to Him who can save your soul !"

The whole frame of the lieutenant seemed to be under the influence of great inward excitement; and it was some minutes before he could speak with composure: finally, however, he gathered strength enough to raise himself in his bed, and looking intently into the face of his visiter, he exclaimed, "Sir, you are a clergyman!"

"I am," was the unhesitating answer; "and you have determined to take the life of any such who should dare to speak to you of your soul. Your soul is more precious than my life; and even at the risk of never leaving this room alive, I have come to urge you to make your peace with God. You have determined to take my life. Here is your dirk, (he had drawn it from under the young man's pillow, and now placed it in his hand,) and here is my breast; if my errand merits such treatment, strike."

The sick man strongly grasped the dagger, for a few moments it shook in his hand, and then dropped harmlessly on the bed; while the man himself, sinking down with weakness and excitement, cried out, "Tell me, O! tell me, what shall I do to be saved?" He saw at once that he had been acting under the influence of self-delusion;—that he had doubted Christianity, not because it wanted evidences for its support, but because his heart was proud. He early knew, that to be a true Christian, it was necessary to be humble; and his haughty spirit deliberately rejected a religion which would not permit him to be as he was. But now the intrepid conduct and earnest admonitions of the clergyman pressed conviction upon his mind: he became willing to be saved in God's own way, and therefore the greatest obstacle was overcome: for our heavenly Father is *always* anxious to receive us as His children; and that we do not become so, is owing to our unwillingness to be saved in the manner He has appointed, that is, not through our own merits, but by those of His only-begotten and once crucified Son.

The minister saw his dying charge often, and at every successive visit beheld greater evidence of a wounded and contrite spirit—of a heart longing for reconciliation with a holy God. Many and fervent were the prayers which the penitent offered up to the Father of mercies; and many and glowing were the thanks which the minister poured forth as he saw the weary and heavy-laden soul approaching each day more and more near the foot of the cross, to lay his burden there. The wished-for period, the period for which he had long been looking, at length arrived; the sick man determined, by the aid of God, to give up all for CHRIST, to take no longer his own perverse will, but the will of his Saviour for his guide; and resolved to devote, as far as was in his power, his few remaining hours only to His glory. The determination was no sooner taken, than that peace which surpasses all human understanding, the peace of God himself, was poured into his heart, and he rejoiced in the hope of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus' blood.

I will not detain the reader with an account of the hopes and fears in which he indulged during the remainder of his existence ;—I say *fears*, for there were times when a consciousness of sin, still clinging to its former vassal, would make him doubt even the mercies of his heavenly Parent : but these doubts were of short duration, and only made him more determined in the strength of God to resist temptation, lest, after all, Satan should get possession of his soul.

Let us hasten to the conclusion of his story. After lingering for some weeks under his disease, contrary to all expectation, he partially recovered, and with a heart new warmed with holy feelings, departed for his distant friends, in whose arms he sought to die. The emotions which the sick man experienced while parting with the faithful minister, he alone might have properly described, because he only could have felt them. Of course there was in his bosom that mingling of gratitude and love, the evidence of which forms one of the greatest earthly rewards of him who here labors to bring souls to a knowledge of saving truth. In these dispositions the young man embarked on board a vessel ; but not many weeks elapsed before information was received of his death at sea. "I have good reason to believe," wrote a clergyman who was a fellow passenger, and attended him in his last moments, "that he died with a satisfactory conviction that God had deigned to hear his prayers, and in full expectation of a blessed immortality."

Reader, does this young man's story interest you ? Your own should, more. Like him, before his repentance, you may be living in unbelief. I do not mean to say that you are an avowed unbeliever in the word of God.—No ! you may be only secretly opposed to it, and for the same reason that the lieutenant disliked it, because your heart is proud—you are not willing to be saved in the way the ALMIGHTY has appointed. Could you *purchase* a place in heaven, for all the gold you could gather in a life-time, how freely would you give it ! Did an entrance into that blessed place depend upon your performing some extraordinary actions, how freely would you do them ! But now, when it is offered only on condition of your so subduing your proud heart, as to make it subject to the will of God, and so loving the Lord JESUS as to surrender yourself to him as the purchase of his blood, you scornfully reject it. Think, O think, what is the extent of your practical unbelief, and your awful danger, should death overtake you ! Remember, I beseech you, that few, *very* few, are so long confined to a death-bed as the individual whose history you have just read ; and that though the LORD of heaven and earth is ever inviting sinners to return to him, that invitation can only be extended to you while you live. Fly, then, fellow immortal, to HIM who alone is able to save your soul—to JESUS, who has died for you, that, believing in him, you may have everlasting life.



A

SHORT VIEW

OF

THE CHURCH CATECHISM.



Q. How is this Catechism to be considered by persons of riper years?

A. As a form of Christian Doctrine, which they are to understand in all its parts.

Q. Of how many parts does it consist?

A. Of five parts.

Q. Which are they?

A. 1 The Baptismal Covenant. 2. The Belief. 3. The Commandments. 4. Prayer. 5. The Holy Sacraments.

Q. And what does the Catechism teach altogether?

A. It teaches the Christian *Faith*, and the Christian *Life*.

Q. What is explained in the *first* part of the Catechism?

A. The Baptismal covenant, or the terms of our Christian calling.

Q. What does the *second* part teach?

A. The Articles of the Christian Faith, in the Apostles' Creed.

Q. What does the Creed teach in the whole?

A. Our Creation, Redemption, Sanctification, and Glorification.

Q. By whom?

A. By the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is taught in the *third* part of the Catechism?

A. The Rule of Duty in the Ten Commandments.

Q. Duties are of two sorts; which are they?

A. The first four Commandments teach our duty to God; the others our duty to our neighbour and ourselves.

Q. What does the *fourth* part of the Catechism teach?

A. The necessity, the benefit, and the form of prayer.

Q. Whose is that prayer which is the pattern of all prayer?

A. The Lord's Prayer; delivered for our instruction and use by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the great excellence of this prayer?

A. It comprehends every thing we ought generally to pray for.

Q. What does the *fifth* part of the Catechism teach?

A. The doctrine of the Holy Sacraments—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What does God give to man in a Sacrament?

A. Inward and spiritual grace.

Q. How does He give it in such Sacrament?

A. Under an outward and visible sign.

Q. Why so?

A. To show the nature of it; because we can thus more readily understand any thing spiritual.

Q. What is Water a sign of?

A. Of the Holy *Spirit*.

Q. What is bread a sign of?

A. Of the *body* of Christ.

Q. What is wine a sign of?

A. Of the *blood* of Christ.

Q. How are Sacraments to answer the good purposes intended by them?

A. By being properly administered and properly received.

Q. What do you mean by *properly administered*?

A. By those whom God hath appointed by an outward and visible calling.

Q. What do you mean by *properly received*?

A. With a lively *faith* and a *penitent* heart.

Q. When so received, what is their effect?

A. They bring us to a state of salvation, and keep us in it.

No. 39.

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THE REVERENCE REQUIRED IN PRAYING TO GOD.



IN order to correct the very irreverent custom too many use, of *sitting* while humble, solemn prayer is making to ALMIGHTY God, it will be proper to attend to the injunctions and particular directions of our Church in this respect, which are grounded on Scriptural authorities, for a different practice. As all our public prayers to the SUPREME BEING, are made in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST (the only mediator between God and men) it is highly becoming, that we should follow the example held out to us in God's Word, respecting the usual posture of devout worshippers, while addressing the CREATOR and REDEEMER of mankind. The following passages, from both the Old and New Testament, it is to be hoped will prove useful to reform the indecent practice of sitting during those parts of divine worship which expressly require us to *kneel*—for as from want of use or inability all men may not be able to kneel for a continuance of time without some uneasiness, in that case, standing, at least while devout supplications are making to the throne of Grace, is an attitude more suitable to the solemnity of prayer, and indeed indispensable in every humble Christian.

We see in Holy Scripture (2 Kings v. 18.) that even Heathens bowed to their fancied gods; and shall Christians do less to the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords! It is shown in the 22d Psalm and 30th verse, that all that go down to the dust (all who call on the name of the Lord) “shall *kneel* before him.” Yea all Kings shall fall down before him. (Psalm lxxii. 11.) Accordingly we read of Solomon's *kneeling on his knees* in worship, (2 Chron. vi. 13.) and rising up from kneeling on his knees (1 Kings viii. 54.) and the holy prophet Daniel used the same humiliating attitude in prayer, who kneeled three times a day on his *knees*. (Dan. vi. 10.) When St. Paul took leave of the pious disciples that accompanied him to the ship—we do not read of their sitting, or even standing while offering up petitions unto God, for their mutual safety, and his blessing on them—but they *kneeled down* on the shore and prayed. (Acts xxi. 5.) Had not that posture been the most proper they certainly would have preferred the other. Wherewith (saith the prophet Micah, vi. 6.) shall I come before the Lord, and *bow myself* before the Most High God? And when the Apostolic prayeth for his disciples, (Eph. iii. 14.) he says, “For this cause *I bow my knees* unto the Father of our

LORD JESUS CHRIST. What do we expressly declare we will do in the early part of our excellent Church service, (Ps. xcv. 6.) "O come let us worship and fall down and *kneel* before the Lord our Maker." With what truth can they pronounce these words, who idly, and irreverently, *sit* during the most solemn services of the Church? "I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, (Isaiah xlv. 23.) that unto me *every knee shall bow*;" or as St. Paul introduces the quotation, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow unto me." (Rom. xiv. 11.) Again, the propriety and necessity of this becoming posture in vile dust and ashes, before the throne of the MOST HIGH, is fully established by this single text. (Phil. ii. 10.) "At the name of JESUS *every knee shall bow*—of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth."

And if there is need of any stronger proof than what has been advanced, for the humbling the body as well as the mind, when calling upon God, take the pure example of the blessed JESUS himself, during his abode on earth, whose mode of worship places beyond all doubt what posture best suits the supplicant to heaven. His authority alone is sufficient to direct our practice, for we read, (Luke xxii. 41.) that JESUS *kneeled down* and prayed." In short, the gross indecency of sitting while we pray to God, is strongly reprobated by our different conduct towards mortal men. Would a condemned criminal, imploring his forfeited life of an earthly Sovereign, or even a needy dependant asking a favour of his patron, instead of standing to solicit their regard, sit down before them while suing for the desired benefit? And shall we thus honour the creature more than the CREATOR?—Reason—decency—and the Divine command—unite in reproaching such senseless and irreverent conduct!

May all who enter the hallowed walls of God's holy house, consider in whose presence they then appear: What a mighty and holy being they are addressing: That "Where two or three are gathered together in CHRIST's name, there is he in the midst of them." And struck with a due sense of their great unworthiness, and a profound awe of the Divine Majesty, may they find grace to know, and feel, their need of help, to worship Him as depending creatures ought—with that humble and reverent posture that becomes the sinner, before the MAJESTY of Heaven.

No. 40

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THE LORD'S DAY.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

IF you have any reverence for Almighty God, who is the greatest and best of Beings, and on whom you entirely depend for happiness, in this life and the next, remember His express command to “keep holy the Sabbath Day.”—If you have any love for your own souls, any desire to be taught by what means you may be blessed for ever in heaven;—Let nothing but sickness, or some other unavoidable hindrance, prevent your attendance on the public Service of the Church every Lord's day. Diligently seek the Lord where He may be found; call upon Him in His “house of prayer,” and you will experience inward peace, and joy, and comfort; you will become better Christians and happier men; and you will have occasion, in the day of Judgment, to rejoice, that you had grace and wisdom to attend to this warning.

No. 41.

NEW-YORK:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY;





CLERGYMAN'S ADDRESS

TO HIS PARISHONERS,

ON WATCHFULNESS.

ALTERED FROM A TRACT OF THE BRISTOL CHURCH OF ENGLAND TRACT SOCIETY.



I MUST PRAY ALWAYS should be printed in your remembrance and live in your every thought. But an injunction to pray would be incomplete unless followed by an exhortation TO WATCH.

WATCH AND PRAY should ever go together. Unless you *watch*, you will not know what to pray for: you will not know the dangers you have to guard against, nor the blessings you stand in need of: nay, without *watching*, you will not in many instances discover whether your prayers are answered by God or not.

You see the importance of *watching*, in the case of the sentinel, who is stationed to guard some pass of moment from the secret approach of the enemy. You feel the duty of *watching*, when your parent, or child or a beloved friend is attacked with some acute or dangerous disease. You admit it is needful to *watch*, if the merchant would profit by the golden opportunity; if the sailor would catch the favouring breeze; or the husband man make hay while the sun shines.

But surely, in a spiritual view, it is still more incumbent on you to *watch*. You are beset by a subtle and ever active foe, who goeth about "seeking whom he may devour." (1 *Peter* v. 8.)—You are infected with a disease deadly in its nature, and difficult to cure. You must make the most of to-day, while it is called to-day, if you would secure the pearl of great price; if you would arrive at the wished for haven; if you would enjoy the gladdening beams of the Sun of righteousness. On all these accounts how much does it behove you to *watch*!

I. *Watch* then, in the first place, against the wiles of the Devil!

Remember, he is ever *watching* you, seeking to draw you from God, to disgust you with serious religion, and to make the yoke of Christ seem heavy and galling. He will suggest, "that there is no need to be so very good: that to live a life of faith is to be righteous overmuch: that sin is very pleasant, and **not so** very dangerous: that the sin you wish to commit, is but a little one; that the LORD perhaps will not see it, or if He does, that He will not be extreme in punishing it: that you have plenty of time to repent, and work out your salvation; that if *you* are condemned, woe be to thousands:" in short, he will whisper to you, as he once fatally whispered to Eve; "Though you do what **GOD** for bids, you shall not *surely* die." (*Gen.* iii. 4.)

When such thoughts as these, my brethren come into your mind, be sure they come from the Evil One. Oh then be on the *watch*, do not parley with the tempter! do not reason with him! but cut him short with the only weapon he cannot withstand; the Word of God; say, as the Son of God himself said, "Get thee hence Satan!" (*Matt.* iv. 10.) Remember it is written, "Thou, **GOD**, seest me." (*Gen.* xvi. 13.) the "end of those things, the wages of sin, is **DEATH**." (*Rom.* vi. 21. 23.)

To cultivate and ever keep alive and active

"————— a godly fear,
A quick, discerning eye,
That looks to **CHRIST** when sin is near
And sees the tempter fly."

II. *Watch*, in the next place, against the enticements of the world. Oh, what unceasing *watchfulness* does it demand, to use this world and not abuse it; to partake of its good things, as a traveller does of the accommodations on the road: to be thankful for the refreshment provided, but still to have the heart set on heaven, and the eye directed to Jesus "the author and finisher of our faith!" (*Heb.* xii. 2.) Ye that love the world think of Demas, once a companion of apostles! "Demas," says St. Paul with a heavy heart, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 *Tim.* iv. 10.)

Again, what a *watchful* spirit does it require, not to follow a multitude to do evil; to decline things that are indifferent, because they lead to others that are sinful: to resist, it may be, the example and the solicitation of those whom we esteem, and love, and look up to: with the most anxious desire to be dutiful, to refuse for conscience' sake, compliance with a father's wish, and to let a mother sue in vain! How apt are we to say, "What such

one does cannot be wrong; surely we may safely follow, where such people go before—and it is what all the world does.”

True—and on that very account be *watchful*; for what all the world does is rarely right in the sight of God; names and numbers cannot make it so. “Wide is the gate and broad is the road, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.” (*Matt. vii. 13.*) If your dearest friends venture from the right path, pity them, and pray for them, but do not follow them. Tell them of the dangers they do not see; warn them of the snares that are laid in the way; but keep yourself “unspotted from the world.” (*James i. 17.*)

III. Next let me bid you *watch* over your own heart; “for out of it are the issues of life.” (*Prov. iv. 23.*) Trifling would be the danger from the world and the Devil, were the heart *well watched*. Oh, look closely into it; lay aside self-love; remember, “the heart is deceitful, above all things;” (*Jer. xvii. 9.*) suspect the worst: submit to the test of Scripture: and pray earnestly to God to “search and know your heart: to try you, and know your thoughts; and if there be any way of wickedness in you,” which you have loved, to detect it for you, and “lead you from it into the way everlasting.” (*Psalms cxxxix. 23, 24.*) *Watching* your heart with holy David, and calling God to assist you in the oversight and scrutiny; you will with him be forced to exclaim, “Ah! who can tell how oft he offendeth!” and then too you will be prepared with him to pray, “Oh! cleanse thou me from my secret faults!”

IV. But, further, I would have you *watch* the dealings of Providence. Perhaps when you have been raised from hopeless sickness, or preserved from great danger, you have thankfully acknowledged the goodness of God:—but the *watchful* disciple discovers the loving-kindness of God in everything, in the health he enjoys, in his strength to labour, in the bread that feeds him, in the friends that love, in the family comforts with which he is surrounded: he sees Divine love in them all, and experiences a double relish from receiving them at the hand of his reconciled Father in Christ. By *watching* he walks with God—and to walk with God is heaven upon earth.

It is true, the Lord sometimes makes himself known to those who are not seeking him; but his usual method is to manifest himself to those who are *watching* his dispensations; who are striving to collect his will and learn their duty from the occurrences they meet with: and to them he oftentimes interprets his word by his providence.

"The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth." (*Psalm* ix. 17.) and "they which regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." (*Psalm* xxviii. 5.)

V. Once more, let me urge you to *watch* the motions of the Holy Spirit. From Him come "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works." Do you feel something within you, telling you that you are a lost sinner; that you stand in the utmost need of pardon, and that without it you must perish?—*This* is the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Are you led to despair of help in yourself? To see, that your best works are defiled by sin? and hence do you gladly flee to a crucified Saviour, and put your whole trust in His atoning blood?—*This* too is the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Are you weary and sick of sin? Do you feel it to be a heavy burden? and yet do you tremble at the thought of falling into temptation, and pray for grace to help in time of need?—*This* is still the teaching of the Holy Ghost.—As sure as God is in heaven, His Spirit is striving with your spirit.:

"He to the conscience doth convey
Those checks which we should know;
His motions point to us the way—
He gives us strength to go."

Oh *watch* the motions of this heavenly Monitor! cherish His divine breathings! follow his godly impulse! He will guide you to peace and holiness here, and give to you at last the blessing promised to that servant, "whom his Lord when he cometh shall find *watching*." (*Luke* xii. 37.)

And now, Brethren, I commend you to the gracious care of Him, without whose blessing the *Watchman* waketh but in vain: of Him, who "alone is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." (*Jude* 24.)

No. 43.

NEW-YORK:

NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY



AN ADDRESS

TO

A YOUTH AT SCHOOL.

WILL you allow a person, who was once such as you are now, to present to you a Paper, which is meant to do you good, both in this world, and in that to come?

Your parents and friends regard you with tender affection and anxious hope. It depends upon yourself to reward that affection and fulfil that hope by a life such as is fitting for a man and a Christian, or to destroy them both by your bad conduct. Should it please Almighty God to spare your life, you will have to be an instrument either of increasing the great mass of sin and misery that is already in the world, or else of adding to the number of those that live in piety and happiness. You surely cannot hesitate one moment which to choose! To be a blessing rather than a curse to those around you, and to the world,—to be an instrument of good and not of evil, will doubtless be your resolution. But it is as yet uncertain what station in life you will fill, what influence among men you may possess, or in what circumstances you may be placed. Man is born ignorant of every thing. Education is necessary, because you have every thing to learn. In order to do their duty to God and to you, your parents or friends have placed you under the care of those whose instruction and advice, if you will use them rightly, will make you both respectable and happy. And since the time that you can spend with them is short, you are so much the more bound to do all in your power to improve it as much as possible.

In the first place, watch carefully over all your conduct, that it may be such as suits your character and privileges as a youthful Christian. Let your daily behaviour be as you will wish it had been when you are before the judgment seat of God.

When you rise in the morning and again when you lie down at night do not forget, by prayer, to acknowledge your dependence on God, whose watchful kindness continually preserves you. Adore him for his greatness and his goodness. Confess to him the sins that you must be conscious you are every day committing. Beseech him to pardon them, and to give you a new and holy heart, for the sake of his Son our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Pray earnestly for more disposition and ability to learn whatever is needful for you, and more especially beg in humility for the help and teaching of his Holy Spirit. And while you pray for yourself, do not forget to pray for blessings on your parents, your teachers, your friends, your school-fellows and companions, and upon all mankind.

Be at school among the earliest. Order and regularity are important parts of our duty to one another, and, in particular, punctuality shows some fixed and steady principle, and will be very useful to you in many ways through life. While in school, remember the object of your coming there, and show your proper sense of it, and your wish to do your duty, by your diligence, your attention, and your quietness and obedience.

Do not imagine that it is possible for you to know too much. God has given you power to learn, and it is his will, and for your own advantage, that this should be faithfully and diligently used. Think that whatever you may now have an opportunity to learn, will in all probability be often useful to you in the course of your life, and may give you the power of being useful to others as well as to yourself. Let this induce you to use every means of improving yourself that is afforded you, and to aim at excelling in every useful acquirement.

Be careful in the choice of your companions and friends. If you see any bad habits or dispositions in any of your school-fellows, prudently avoid them. Attach yourself chiefly to those who are diligent, thoughtful, and amiable. Always behave in the most respectful manner to your teachers, and to all that may happen to visit you. Avoid being either bashful or bold and forward, but strive to be at the same time free and modest. Be moderate in eating and drinking, and do it decently. Let your dress be always neat and clean. In your behaviour to your companions, be kind and cheerful. The law of God requires you to love every body truly, and to show your love to them by doing them all the good you can: for 'if God so loved us,' as 'to send his only Son' to take our nature and suffer and die for us, that we might be saved from his dreadful wrath, "ought not we also to love one another?" Never, on any account, tell a lie, or say anything that may be understood so as to be a lie. Never conceal anything wrong that you may have done yourself from those that have the care of you, nor anything that others may have done, that it is positively your duty to make known. At the same time, remember that a tale-bearer is an odious person, and a perpetual cause of mischief and unhappiness.

But the principal thing that I have to say to you, is, to beg you to attend to the important concerns of your immortal soul. You know that you are composed of two parts, your body, the outward part which we see and feel, and your soul, which thinks, and gives life to your body of flesh and blood. Now when this body dies, and returns to the dust of which the first man was made, what do you think will be the condition of your soul, which *cannot die* and be dissolved, like the body? Will it be fit to appear before the good and holy God, and enjoy forever the happiness which is in his presence, in the company of his holy Angels? Consider what is your nature and condition, and you will know what answer you may give to this question.

You have read in your Bible, that Adam, the first of our race

was created in the image of God, a perfectly holy, just, and good man; but that he soon disobeyed the command of God, and so lost his image and his favour. We are all descended from Adam, and are born in the condition to which he was brought by his sin, having our natures corrupt and disposed to wickedness. Examine your own heart and you will find that *you* are not any better than all the rest of mankind. Consider what your Bible, the lessons of your teachers, and your own conscience, show that you *ought* to be, and compare with that what you *have been* in heart and life, ever since you were able to tell good from evil; and you will be convinced that you are A SINNER. As such, you cannot of yourself obtain the favour of God, who is 'too holy to look' with kindness 'on iniquity,' but must, on the contrary, be liable to his dreadful anger, and punishment from his offended justice. But God, in his mercy, has provided a way by which you may still obtain his pardon for your sins, and his gracious love and favour:

His wondrous love, and grace are shown
To souls improv'rish'd and undone,

by sending a Redeemer who shall "save his people from their sins." His name is Jesus: the only Begotten Son of God, who left his glorious majesty in heaven, and came down to this world, and took upon him our nature, and "was made in the likeness of man," that he might suffer punishment instead of us, and by dying upon the cross, and rising again from the dead, procure salvation for all that will repent of their sins and believe in him, as their Saviour and Redeemer. His blood is compared in the Bible to a fountain of pure water, and by believing that he came from God, and died to save you from your sins, you may, as it were, wash in that fountain, and be clean from all the stains of guilt and sin.

You have also as much need of a Sanctifier as of a Redeemer, for none but "the pure in heart shall see God." This Sanctifier is the Holy Spirit, who is sent by God the Father and the Son to teach the hearts of those who repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, and cleanse them from their natural wickedness. His gracious influence can "create in you a new heart, and renew a right spirit within you," restoring you "to the image of God in knowledge, and righteousness, and true holiness." This new nature you must have, before you can hope to be saved through Christ. To be happy in Heaven, you must have a heavenly disposition. It is not very long since you were born into the world in the evil nature that we all have from Adam. Oh! that it may not be long before you receive a *new* nature—new and holy desires and dispositions—from God the Holy Ghost, who will, if you believe in Christ, and pray for his assistance, sanctify you, as he does all the people of God.

You have already been solemnly dedicated to God your Maker, your Redeemer, and your Sanctifier, in your baptism. Make not that holy rite a useless and unmeaning form, by your neglect of

the promises that were then made for you, and the duties that it was then engaged you should perform. You have been received into the Church of Christ, which is the Society of those who believe in him, and take him for their Lord and Master, to whom he has promised salvation from sin and punishment, and the eternal joys of heaven, if they will keep the conditions that he has given them. Will you, merely for thoughtlessness and folly, give up these glorious privileges, to which you are entitled if you will only keep the easy conditions of giving up sin and wickedness, and putting your whole trust in your Redeemer, loving him with all your heart, who has done so much for you, and keeping his good and holy laws? Remember that you belong to your Saviour, who has "bought you with the price" of his most precious blood, and that you were given up to him by your parents in your baptism, to be "his faithful servant and soldier to your life's end." Would you shamefully desert him who has such a claim upon you, and who only wishes to use that claim for the eternal good of your immortal soul? Give yourself up to him, then, by sincerely loving him, and believing his power and goodness, and endeavouring to do his will.

Bear with me, dear youth; let me detain your attention a little longer on a subject so important. If a soul immortal is superior to a perishing body—if eternity is longer than time—if heaven is higher than the ground we tread—if God, the great fountain of being and bliss, is all in all—then your wisdom, duty, and happiness, all join in this one point—your seeking the glory of God in your present and everlasting salvation. How sweet and powerful is the way in which God persuades you to benefit yourself by doing this! By his authority as your Maker and Preserver he justly requires all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength but he condescends to invite you, and his language is, "My son, give me thine heart." How kind is what he declares—"I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me!"

The advantages of early piety are without number. We cannot tell how many dangers will be avoided, how many blessings will be attained! The profane youth, listening to the advice of false friends and evil counsellors, and indulging all the evil dispositions of his corrupt nature, plunges at once into sin and misery. Health and peace, good character and usefulness, may soon be lost, but cannot be easily regained. Very often they are absolutely gone so as never to be recovered. The heart of a kind and tender parent is filled with the most bitter anguish—the numbers of the wicked are increased, and their hands are strengthened—good men are grieved and wounded—the holy name of God is dishonoured—and the immortal soul is swallowed up in the depths of hell!

On the other hand, if, in early life, you seek after God with your whole heart, and devote yourselves to his service, the most happy consequences may justly be expected. God will be glorified, and your everlasting happiness effectually secured. Holy

angels will rejoice on your account. The wise and good in this world will number you among their friends, and bless God that he has brought you to a knowledge of his pleasant and peaceful ways. The comfort of your parents, will be increased by your pious conduct, and, if they are truly Christian parents, they can desire no greater joy on earth than to see their children walking in the truth. The force of your good example will work, in some degree, on the hearts of your young companions and acquaintance. And is it not indeed desirable to imitate the examples that have been given *you* by Joseph and Samuel, Obadiah and Timothy, whose names appear with honour in the word of God? Above all, reflect how beautiful was the character, how lovely the behaviour, of your blessed Redeemer Jesus, at your age!

Religion, and religion alone, can give you tranquility and enjoyment. Its pleasures are not like those of this world, that always disappoint and never last. They are solid and satisfactory, and will go on increasing in number and in excellence through all eternity. They give peace and quietness to the poor, and double all the comforts of the rich: they support people under the bitterest affliction, and increase the joys of those that are in prosperity: the cheerfulness that they produce settles into a continual habit, which animates every lawful pursuit, and keeps down the love of trifles and useless gaiety.

My young friend! persons of your own age, and in your situation, have been known to retire at stated seasons from the rest of their companions, that they might think of these things without being interrupted. They have read about them, they have conversed together, they have prayed, they have wept, they have rejoiced—and when they have quitted school, the remembrance of having done so, has not only given them satisfaction, but filled them with warmer and stronger resolutions to go on in the way that they had begun—of faith, and obedience, and love. Take the advice of a true and affectionate *friend*, who earnestly intreats you, in the words of our Saviour,

GO THOU, AND DO LIKEWISE.

To enable any young friend who may have read the foregoing advice, and is willing to receive it and profit by it, to *apply it to practice*, I will offer him a few plain and simple

DIRECTIONS.

I. HAVE GOD IN ALL YOUR THOUGHTS. It is a part of the description of *the wicked*, that "God is not in all his thoughts;" *Psalms* x. 4.

By this I do not mean to require that you should think of *nothing else* but GOD: nor even that His *name* should occur in every thought that may enter your mind. The intent of my rule is, that everything you think, or say, or do, should be thought, or said, or done, *with a remembrance of the will of GOD*. So the Bible teaches us, that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do," we must "do all to the glory of GOD;" *1 Cor.* x. 31.

How would you have a kind and beloved parent in all your thoughts? Everything which *concerned* that dear parent you would be scrupulously careful so to do, or to engage in, as to give him pleasure or do him good. GOD is *concerned* in *all* you do, or *can* do, think, or say. By the slightest action of your lives His power and goodness are displayed, and His glory may be advanced, if it is according to His will.

Think, then, my young friend, before you engage in any affair of consequence, and often while you are busy in your ordinary concerns, "I am GOD's child: His glory and honour are concerned in what I am about: is it according to His will? do I do it because it is my duty, and with the view of doing good? can I hope for the approbation of my Heavenly Father in it? will it have any share in procuring for me, at the last great day the blessed sentence of "Well done, good and faithful servant?" Put such questions to yourself frequently in the course of every day, and you will soon grow into an observance of my *first* direction, to **KEEP GOD IN ALL YOUR THOUGHTS**.

But

II. YOU MUST COME TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST. "*I am the way and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me,*" said our Saviour, when Thomas asked him how he should go to the Father? (*John* xiv. 6.)

You cannot think of GOD as you ought, except as he is revealed by His SON. The majesty of GOD is too great for our feeble minds: but when He humbled Himself to be made man for us that "being in the likeness of men," he might suffer for our sins

"becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness;" *this we can understand*, and since we have learned to know the blessed **JESUS**, the Saviour of the world, "we have known the **FATHER** also, as he himself declares, *John* xiv. 7. We can *feel* the love which made **GOD** "give His Only Begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" the love that made the SON leave his "glory, which he had with the **FATHER**, before the world was," and "take upon him the form of a servant," that he might be "a propitiation for our sins:" *this we can feel*, and learn the debt of gratitude we owe to Him who has done so much for us. And now that **CHRIST** has ascended into heaven, there to dwell at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and "live forever to make intercession for us," we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, asking mercy, and grace to help us in time of need," knowing that "we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, **JESUS THE SON OF GOD.**" *Through him*, then, young friend, let your thoughts recur to the **GOD** who made you, and will judge you; and was "manifest in the flesh," that **He** might redeem you.

III. To come to **GOD** through **CHRIST**, you must **STUDY THE WORD OF GOD**, that you may learn the history, the nature, the will of **CHRIST**. "Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of me:" he said. (*John*. v 39.)

The Scriptures tell us why the Saviour was needed; how he was promised; what he came to do; when he came; how he was received; what he did, and taught, and suffered; where he has gone; what he is now doing; and how he will come again, "with power and great glory," to judge every man according to his deeds.

In the Bible **GOD** condescends to speak with you. He makes you acquainted with his will. He teaches you to know Him, and to know yourself. He tells you of His goodness, and of the way which He has appointed for the salvation of your souls. Listen, then, to His gracious voice. Go to learn of Him with an humble and teachable heart, **STUDY THE SCRIPTURES**, and there you will find **CHRIST JESUS**, "the way, the truth, and the life."

But

IV. From the word of **GOD** you will learn that you must **BE TRUE AND LIVELY** (that is, *faithful*) **MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH**. "He that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved," is the **SAVIOUR'S** promise. (*Mark* xvi. 16.) To *receive* that promise

you must be connected with His Church by baptism. "He that despiseth *you*, despiseth *me*, and he that despiseth *ME*, despiseth *HIM* that sent me;" is our Saviour's declaration to His ministers. To avoid the fearful risk of *despising* God, you must *receive* that *ministry* which Christ established to maintain His church "unto the end of the world;" you must *hear* their *instructions* and obey them as far as they agree with the word of God, and *partake* of those holy *ordinances* which they are appointed to minister, as the means of grace which God has chosen to convey the blessed influences of His Spirit to His weak and sinful creatures.

V. But beware, young friend, of supposing that you can do all this, or any part in your own strength. Let all your desires endeavours, and efforts, be IN DEPENDANCE UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. "Without me," HE declares, "ye can do nothing." "Our sufficiency" says the Bible, "is of GOD." We are commanded to "work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling;" but at the same time we are told that "it is GOD *that* worketh in us both to will and do." PRAY, then; *pray earnestly* that GOD may "cleanse the thoughts of your heart, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that you may perfectly love Him and worthily magnify His holy name;" and that, as, "through the weakness of your mortal nature, you can do no good thing without HIM, HE may grant you the help of His grace, that in keeping His commandments, you may please Him, both in will and deed, through JESUS CHRIST."

JESUS SAID "I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth. If men, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children; how much more shall your HEAVENLY FATHER give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" *Luke xi. 9—13.*

"MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS; GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM; THAT THY PROFITING MAY APPEAR TO ALL." *1 Timothy iv. 15*

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FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

THE PUBLIC WORSHIP

OF

ALMIGHTY GOD

AGREEABLY TO THE SERVICES

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SECOND EDITION.

STEREOTYPED BY JAMES CONNER, NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY



FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS, &c.



EVER bear in mind that the great object which the Christian should have in view in going to Church, is *the worship of God*, and not *the hearing of the sermon*. This last is indeed important, and provision is, therefore, wisely made for it by the Church. But she has also, as wisely, and in the true spirit of piety, made worship the principal object.

Be very careful, therefore, to go to Church, with a main desire to worship, and in a corresponding frame of mind. Fondness for hearing favorite preachers too often takes place of true Christian preparation of heart to render homage to God, and to appear acceptably in his house of prayer. Under the show of religion, and sometimes under the delusive idea that it is religion, much that deserves no better name than dissipation, enters into the feelings and views of many in attending on divine service. Surely the true love of God, and a sincere desire to honor him, will make us, in attending at the sanctuary, think rather of worshipping him, than hearing his servant.

Be uniform in attending one place of worship. Variety in this respect is calculated to distract the mind, and interfere with the composure and undivided attention so necessary to a spirit of true devotion. It is the peculiar happiness of those who attend the services to which this tract refers, to know that, without respect to the particular talents of the officiating minister, those pious feelings which should most influence them in attending public worship, will be *always* gratified by the best prayers and praises, and by a large share of instruction from the holy Scriptures.

As you go to Church, reflect on the object you have in view on the penitence, the humility, the faith, and the love of God and man, with which your mind should be possessed when engaged in the worship of your Maker.

Be careful to be always at Church before the appointed time of commencing service.

Do not stand by the Church door, but immediately enter, with the reflection that you are appearing in the temple of the Most High God.

When at your accustomed seat, fall upon your knees,^a and silently offer the following prayer, or other like:—*Almighty God, be with me, I humbly beseech thee, in this attendance in thy holy house. Give me a becoming awe of thy presence. Grant me thy direction and aid, that in confession I may be humbled, and truly penitent; in prayer, serious and devout; in praises, grateful and sincere; and in hearing thy word, attentive, and willing and desirous to be instructed. Give me true faith in the atonement of thy Son, as alone sufficient to procure thy favour and blessing; that worshipping thee in spirit and in truth, my services may be accepted, through his all-sufficient merits. Amen.*

Remain, then, in silent meditation on some religious subject. Or, if your mind is disposed to wander, fix its attention by reading in your Bible or Prayer Book. Above all things, avoid the gross indecorum of degrading the sanctuary into an ordinary place of meeting with your friends, by exchanging salutations, or conversing with them.^b

When the minister enters, regard him as the ambassador of God, authorised to lead *your* devotions to *him*, and to declare *his* will to *you*.

When he commences, lay aside every other thought, and let your mind be entirely set upon the services in which you are engaged.

Rise and listen attentively to the sentences of Scripture with

^a The requisition of kneeling in prayer is one of the many instances of the conformity of our Church to what Scripture, reason, and the practice of the best of men, (and even of the God-man, Christ Jesus,) pronounce the most suitable. It is an unfortunate fact, however, that too many of her members neglect this pious prescription. It is for them only to know their motives. If these are indolence, thoughtlessness, shame, or pride, or whatever they may be, let them remember they must answer for them at the bar of God.

^b The design of the above rules need not be lost by those who engage in the pious, and truly excellent charity of Sunday Schools. The reflection that they are instrumental in rescuing so many from ignorance and vice, and fitting them for engaging with devotion in the services of the Church on earth, and attaining to eternal union with the Church in heaven, is naturally calculated to increase their own devotion, zeal, and fervour. The business of the School should be so arranged that all may be in order and quietness before the service commences. When, as is sometimes the case, a voluntary is played on the organ before the commencement of the service, the music should always be soft and solemn, calculated to aid, and not dissipate, reflection, and to excite feelings of reverence and devotion. Whenever, too, singing is introduced before service, it would appear inconsistent to have this of any other character than that which is calculated to prepare the mind for the *penitential* and *humbling* exercises with which the service commences.

which the service opens, and to the exhortation that follows. Consider them as addressed to you in particular, and designed to excite the dispositions, and impart the views, with which you should worship.

Then kneel down, and "with a pure heart," that is, a heart pure from all other than devout, humble, and contrite feelings, and an "humble voice, accompany" the minister, as he has invited you, "unto the throne of the heavenly grace," in the acknowledgment of your sins.

Devoutly repeat after him the excellent form of confession provided by the Church. Let your mind be deeply engaged. Mean every thing that you say. It is characteristic of this Church, that while her services are sufficiently particular to excite a deep personal interest in every worshipper, they are composed in such thorough accordance with human nature and Gospel truth, as to be calculated for the application of all.

Here, and in every other part of the service where the rubric directs the people to join with the minister, or to answer him in response, do it with an *audible voice*, in about the key of your ordinary conversation. Much of the beauty of our service is lost by inattention in this particular; and it is often seriously marred by leaving what should be the joint concern of the congregation, to one person. Our service contemplates no such officer as Clerk, for any other object than to lead the singing. When, *through the whole congregation*, is heard the voice of prayer and praise, then only will be fully experienced the admirable effect of our liturgy. But the securing of that effect, and the propriety of the thing itself, require farther, that the people be *perfectly silent* in the parts appropriated peculiarly to the minister. The custom, therefore, of repeating those parts, even in a whisper, is contrary to the rules of the Church, and hinders the due effect of the service. In some parts especially, as the exhortation, the absolution, and the blessing, the impropriety is very great.

After the confession, if a priest officiates, he pronounces "the declaration of absolution or remission of sins." Listen to this with silence and deep attention. Remember, if you "truly repent," (and true repentance supposes firm resolutions, through God's grace, to amend,) "and unfeignedly believe" the "holy Gospel," this is the authoritative declaration of God's minister, in *his* name, that your sins are forgiven; and is a fulfilment of the Saviour's declaration to the ministry of his Church, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." Be thankful for

this. Be comforted by it. Be encouraged to seek God's grace, that you may lead a new life. In this spirit, and with a firm resolution to manifest its effect in your life and conversation, say an heartfelt "*Amen.*"

Then looking upon God as your reconciled Father in Christ Jesus; and upon yourself as now, by absolution of your sins, encouraged to present to Him your oblations of prayer and praise; join the minister with heart and voice in the Lord's Prayer, that distinguishing form of the disciples of Jesus.

Having, as sinners were bounden, come into God's presence with exercises of penitence; having received the comfortable declaration of the pardon of your sins; and having hastened to obey your Saviour's injunction, by offering that prayer which is the precious legacy he has left to his disciples; the tender mercies of your God, (as must be natural to the pious worshipper,) next occupy your mind, and you proceed to the grateful return of praise and thanksgiving. But conscious that we are not sufficient for this of ourselves, the minister humbly asks ability from on high—"O Lord, open thou our lips." Express you then, in sincerity of heart, the grateful improvement you will make of this divine aid—"And our mouth shall show forth thy praise."

Then, with elevation at once of soul and body, respond to the minister in the grateful strain of the "*Gloria Patri.*"

You are now about using those inspired songs of praise, which have been offered by the Church militant for nearly 3000 years—the *Psalms of David*. Still farther to excite you to do this with becoming fervour and devotion, the minister exhorts, "Praise ye the Lord." Answer him with the grateful feeling of readiness, and anxiety to be engaged in a service so exalted and happy, "The Lord's name be praised."

Introductory to the psalms for the day, in the morning service, (except on the 19th day of the month, when it forms a part of those psalms; and except, also, on Easter-day, Thanksgiving-Day, and conditionally, a few other days, when special anthems are appointed,) you are called to join in singing or repeating the anthem termed "*Venite exultemus,*" taken principally from the 95th Psalm. In this, and in the psalms for the day, bear your part with gratitude, fervour, and devotion.^a Confession, prayer,

^a Every Christian who is blessed with the necessary natural gifts, should make the cultivation of sacred music a religious duty. Parents should consider it an indispensable part of the religious education of their children. Solemn and appropriate music, correctly executed, and the performance of it shared by a whole con-

and praise, occupy most of these sacred songs; and should excite their appropriate emotions in the breast of the worshipper. In those psalms which relate to God's dispensations towards the Israelitish Church, we should remember that the Church of God has always been the same, although differently organized in different ages, and perfected in its constitution, its services, and its privileges, under the Gospel. Therefore, the divine dispensations towards the Church, at every period, are interesting to her members to the end of time. They have all had a bearing on those great objects of the establishment of the Church, her universal propagation in this world, and her eternal triumph in the next.*

The permission of the Church to use the Gloria Patri at the end of each psalm, will not, properly regarded, be considered a sanction of vain repetition. Especially in these days when a spurious liberality would place *all doctrines* on a level, faithful Christians should rejoice in the frequent and animated use of a hymn, which speaks their ascription of equal glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The doxology is farther a proper

gregation of worshippers, brings the services of the Church militant to their nearest similitude to what is revealed of the Church triumphant. Chants, too, are a much more ancient and solemn mode of worship than metre-singing.

a The nature of the present undertaking will not suffer an enlargement of those views of some of the Psalms, (especially those wearing the form of imprecation,) which should satisfy all scruples about the use of them. The reader is referred to a judicious and satisfactory view of this subject in "A Companion for the Book of Common Prayer," by the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart, published by this Society, and to be had at its Depository. All who can have access to it, should also read Bishop Horne's Commentary on the Psalms; a work justly ranked among the very best extant. As the 109th Psalm, used in the Evening Prayer of the 22d day of the month, has the greatest and the most popular objections made to it, the following remarks with regard to it may not be unseasonable. The objection evinces an unscriptural view of the Psalm itself. St. Peter (Acts i. 20.) determines it to be a prophetic psalm, having a reference to the treachery of Judas Iscariot. It, therefore, sets forth *his* guilt, and the awful maledictions of divine justice against it. In this light only, it should be used. When, in the ordinary course of the Psalter, and especially on Good Friday, we use the 22d Psalm, no one surely thinks of applying it to himself, or to any other person except Jesus Christ, of whose sufferings and death it is so lively and affecting a prophecy. So, in the 109th, which is also a prophecy, our mind should not, for a moment, dwell on any personal injuries which we may have sustained, or indulge the most secret thoughts of those who may have inflicted them; but be entirely taken up with reflection on the awful guilt of him who was in the prophet's eye, and on its dreadful recompense. In one sense, indeed, we should apply the psalm to ourselves, and that most seriously. We, too, may, in a thousand ways, betray our Lord, and the holy cause of his religion, and thus partake of the guilt of Judas. We should weigh well the awful extent of that guilt and the horrible punishment that must ensue. Considered in this light, the psalm is a most important and edifying one.

Similar remarks are applicable to all the psalms of a similar character. They are not the maledictions of *men*, but the revelation of the wrath of *God* against all unrighteousness.

mark of separation between different psalms, which, without it, often succeed each other very abruptly. It is also making each psalm peculiarly *Christian*. The chanting of the "*Gloria in excelsis*," when that follows the psalms for the day, should interest every grateful, devout, and animated feeling.

The whole congregation are then to sit as most favourable to undivided attention, while the minister reads the lessons for the day. To these you should listen as to a voice from heaven. All carelessness of posture, wandering of eyes, or inattention of any kind, is an offence against the majesty of him in whose name his minister authoritatively reads the word of inspiration.

After each lesson, is sung or said by the minister and people, an appropriate psalm or hymn. In which, in a standing posture, you should unite with heart and voice.

Having listened to the prescribed portion of that inspired volume whence your faith is drawn, proceed with the minister in a *profession* of that faith. This you are called to do by the recital of the Apostles' Creed, (so termed from its being a summary of what the Apostles' taught as necessary to be believed;) or the Nicene Creed, (so called from the Christian Council of Nice, at which it was framed.) Each of these contains the substance of Christian doctrine, and should be recited in that serious and devout frame of mind, which is favourable to reflection on the several truths it contains; with that audible voice, which shows you are not ashamed of the profession of your faith; and with a deliberate determination, through God's grace, to preserve that faith unshaken. In reciting the adorable name of Jesus, it is a pious custom, to which you should reverently conform, to manifest, by an humble gesture of the body, the homage of the heart.

Having come into Jehovah's presence with exercises of humility and penitence; having, from a view of your unworthiness, drawn additional motives of gratitude for the loving-kindness of the Lord, and expressed it in psalms and hymns of praise; and in this humble and grateful frame of mind, having listened to the revelation of the will of God, and expressed your sincere faith in the truths of his holy Word, you are now called to approach him in humble supplication for your own necessities, and (as directed by the Gospel) those of your fellow-men. That you may do this acceptably, the minister implores for you the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit—" *The Lord be with you.*" With a proper sense of the importance of the benediction he has pronounced, and a devout prayer that both for himself, and in the

interesting relation in which he is about to stand between God and you, he may be accepted and blessed, reciprocate his affectionate solicitude—" *And with thy spirit.*"

Thus mutually encouraged, you are ready to unite in supplications to the throne of grace. And when the minister has pronounced the pious invitation, "*Let us pray,*" fall low upon your knees, and devoutly respond to him in those scriptural ejaculations wherein you mutually seek that grace which alone can enable you to pray acceptably.

Then in silent, but heartfelt devotion, follow the minister in the collects and prayers; keeping your mind intent upon the subject of each; and making them your own by mentally participating in the offering of them, and by closing each with a devout and audible "*Amen.*"

With the Morning Service on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, is used that affecting and comprehensive form of prayer, "*The Litany, or General Supplication.*" It opens with the most humble and earnest petitions for mercy, by the minister and the people, to the Holy Trinity. Then succeed supplications, in the first paragraph, for *sparing mercy*, the foundations of all our hopes; in the three following for deliverance from the *causes*, the *commission*, and the dreadful *consequences*, of sin; in the next, from natural and violent evils; and in the following, from the awful curse of civil and ecclesiastical insubordination, and from those dreadful, and almost irremediable extremes of guilt, "hardness of heart, and contempt of" God's "word and commandment." We then earnestly plead, for the granting of these requests, what the Saviour has done and suffered for us; and lastly, commit ourselves to his care, in every event of *life*, in *death*, and in *judgment*. The Litany next embraces prayers for the universal Church; for civil rulers; for Bishops, and other ministers of the Gospel; for all the people of God; for peace on earth; for grace to know and do God's will; for the relief, first of the *spiritual*, then of the *temporal* wants of men, with a particular notice of those the most distressing; for the forgiveness of our enemies; for the continuance of the blessing of the fruits of the earth; and lastly, (as that of which we should never lose sight, and which a view of the imperfections of our best services should dictate,) for repentance, forgiveness, and grace to amend. In all these supplications, there is a beautiful and most affecting reciprocity between the minister and people. *He* humbly lays before the throne the varied particulars in which they would seek

the mercy of Heaven. *They*, with one heart and voice, raise the fervent prayer, that that mercy may be vouchsafed.

There is now a slight variation in the form ; one of those many judicious and edifying variations, by which this incomparable Liturgy would keep the minds of the worshippers from langour, and preserve the attention fixed and interested. After a few humble and fervent responsive supplications, the minister and people unite in a devout strain of ejaculatory cries for mercy, closing with that prayer of our Lord, which it is the evangelical principle of our Church to incorporate into all her services.^a Then, after reciprocal ejaculations for mercy, on the sole ground of the unmerited love of God, and the brief exhortation of the minister, "*Let us pray*," (designed here, as where it next occurs, for a remembrancer of the great duty in which we are engaged, and as a call to continue our fervour and devotion,) *he* audibly, and the *people* with silent homage, offer an humble prayer for divine support *under*, and deliverance *out of*, all troubles. The people, then, meekly acknowledging their utter unworthiness, pray God, *for his own sake*, to be entreated. The minister pleads, in the language of the Psalmist,^b the goodness which, in all ages, Jehovah has manifested, as our encouragement to hope for mercy. The people, thus encouraged, repeat their cry, that for his own honour, in the manifestation of his goodness, God would be pleased to hear them. Filled with thanksgiving for the mercy which imparts this encouragement, the minister and people bear their respective parts in a grateful doxology ; and with the hope and trust thus inspired, in unrivalled ejaculations of humility and fervour, pour out their prayers for mercy before this God, so great and good. The pastoral call, "*Let us pray*," again repeated, the minister (after a short prayer, denoting humble submission, if, after all, God sees fit to visit us with the rod, and praying that we may, notwithstanding, preserve confidence in him, and that all events may be sanctified to us) concludes with those parts of the morning service which have been omitted, and the substance of which has not been incorporated into the Litany.^c

^a The Litany is a service distinct from the Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Communion. It is presumed that the excellence of this divine prayer, the beauty and sufficiency it imparts to every service with which it is connected, and the satisfaction and comfort it must afford the pious mind often to recur to that form of supplication which our Lord himself prescribed, sufficiently evince the wisdom and excellence of the above mentioned provision of our Church.

^b Psalm xlv. 1.

^c The minister is allowed, should he think circumstances require it, to omit a part of the Litany.

After the Morning or Evening Prayer, or the Litany, do not rise hastily from your knees, as if gratified to have the service over, but continue on them long enough to use this or a similar ejaculation: *Pardon, O Lord, the imperfections of thy servant; and not on my own, but on my Redeemer's merits, let the acceptance of my services depend.*

When the metre psalms or hymns are sung, observe the same rules as in the use of those in prose; and be especially careful to avoid any attitude or deportment which makes you appear rather as a listener or spectator, than as a worshipper.

When there is the administration of the communion, and *always* on Sundays and Holy-Days, the Church prescribes the use of what is sometimes termed the ante-communion service, that is, the ten commandments, and the collect, epistle, and gospel for the day. And this is both a wise and an edifying order; for Christians should, at least thus often, hear the solemn and authoritative announcing of those commandments which are the foundation of all religious and moral law. And the epistles and gospels, being among the most ancient provisions for Divine Service, must be peculiarly interesting to those who cherish a pious regard for the appointments of Christian antiquity.

Devoutly joining in the Lord's Prayer and the collect, which precede the commandments, will prepare you to listen to them in a proper frame of mind.

When the minister announces these divine laws, remember that he does it in the name of God, and that they should command as great reverence, as if God himself were again declaring them amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai.

After each, ask, in the appointed prayer, mercy for your past transgressions, and grace for future obedience; and after the last, pray that you may ever preserve them all in remembrance, and follow them in heart and life.

Our Saviour's abridgment of these ten commandments, in the two fundamental maxims of his religion, the Church allows to be added by the minister. It will be found both interesting and edifying, if heard with proper attention, and followed with the devout offering of the succeeding prayer.

Then is used the collect for the day, after which rise from your knees, and in the same posture, and with the same dispositions, in which you listened to the lessons, hear the epistle. Then, when the gospel is announced, stand up and give glory to God, that your ears may hear the glad tidings which it brings

When there is a sermon, listen to it with attention, humility, and a desire to be instructed—as delivered by God's ambassador, in *his* name and for *your* good.

When you receive the blessing of the Bishop or Priest, receive it on your knees: not merely as *his*, but as *HIS* who sent him. Be thankful for it, and pray God to seal its full benefits to your soul. Let this be the meaning of an hearty "*Amen*" at its close.

Then offer this or other like prayer:—*Blessed Lord, I thank thee for the opportunity and inclination I have had of coming into thy presence, and attending on the services of thy house. Be merciful unto me. Pardon what thou hast seen amiss, and remedy what thou hast seen deficient in me while here. Accept, and sanctify to me, the unworthy offering of my prayers and praises. Bless to me the instructions I have received. Grant me grace to be faithful to thee while I live, and acceptable to thee when I die; for the sake of those merits, wherein alone are placed my hope and trust—the merits of thy Son, my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Then, without losing your serious and reverent deportment, leave God's house, thankful that you have had the privilege of attending it, and resolving, through his grace, to proceed in that walk of Christian faith, which leads to the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Christian Reader—The services in which this tract has been designed to instruct you, have had the approbation and sanction of the wisdom of the wisest and the piety of the best Christians who have ever lived. They, therefore, afford an effectual and invaluable remedy of the evil of having the devotions of an assembly dependent on the principles, talents, will, disposition, and manner, of an individual. All, too, may take an active part in these services. The propriety and necessity of this feature in social worship, seem now generally conceded, by the usages of what are termed prayer-meetings. But mark here the superiority of the Liturgy on which you have reflected. It gives no room for the erroneous and dangerous (but it is feared, too prevalent) idea, that *making a prayer* is *praying*; and that *skill in making a prayer*, is a test of piety. It precludes those feelings, so congenial with human depravity, of self-complacency for having excited admiration, or outdone a brother, in our prayers; as well as those of anxiety, lest our efforts should suffer by comparison. It affords the worshipper the best of prayers; the most humbling

to the sinner, the most exalting of God and the Saviour, and the most fervent and devout; and bids him see, as an affair between God and his soul alone, that he offers them with humility, penitence, faith, and devotion. Accustom yourself to this mode of worship, sanctioned by Scripture, antiquity, and the practice of the best men for ages; and seriously ask, if any thing is wanting but our own consistency and fidelity, to render it sufficient for every end of public worship. In determining this, be not swayed by the imposing influence of present appearances. Mere change and novelty (especially if in accordance with popular feelings and views) will, at any time, win disciples; and may even draw from the truth some of its less informed and less judicious advocates. Sudden and superficial views of religion, embrace only *immediate* appearances of its influence, without comprehending that *general* and *permanent* order, by which, for his greatest glory, and our greatest good, God is pleased to govern the dispensations of his grace; or those remote, though sure, consequences (essentially changing, in the event, the real character of procedures) which evince the wisdom of that order. Hence the fact, that various novelties in religion have, in their turns, gained much credit and popularity; and wearing the appearance of great good, have even effected the temporary disparagement of the wisdom and piety of ages. But they have, eventually, been found wanting; while that Liturgy, which is our boast, has held her steady course; offering to all who will be led by her, guidance in that good old path in which martyrs, confessors, and holy men in all ages, have walked to the heavenly Jerusalem; and which, like him who commands "walk therein,"^a is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The opportunity afforded in most of our cities, and in some towns and villages, of enjoying the benefits and comforts of this Liturgy, on other days than Sundays, ought to be thankfully embraced. There are few who, by proper management of their time, may not make it convenient *occasionally*, while there are others whose leisure will permit them *regularly*, to attend on these occasions. In no services can the feelings of devotion, characterized by Gospel faith, humility, and order, be better gratified, or improved to greater edification.

^a Jeremiah vi. 16.

PRAYERS,

Proper to be used before attending public worship, or during intervals in divine service; taken chiefly from the Liturgy.

FOR THE DIVINE PRESENCE AND BLESSING:

O ETERNAL God, mighty in power, and of majesty incomprehensible, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, much less the walls of temples made with hands; and who yet hast been graciously pleased to promise thy especial presence, where ever two or three of thy faithful servants shall assemble in thy name, to offer up their praises and supplications unto thee; vouchsafe, O Lord, to be with me in my attendance at thy holy house. Affect me with an awful apprehension of thy divine majesty. Fit my heart to serve thee with reverence and godly fear. Grant me thy grace, in confession, to affect me with a deep sense of my own unworthiness; in prayer, to quicken my devotion; in praises, to heighten my love and gratitude; and in hearing thy word read and preached, to make me serious and attentive, so that I may listen to my duty with an honest heart, in order to practise it. Graft thy word inwardly in my heart, that I may both perceive and know what things I ought to do, and may have power and strength faithfully to fulfil the same. Grant that all my sacred exercises may be performed with such steadiness of faith, and with such seriousness, affection, and devotion of mind, that thou mayest accept my bounden duty and service, and vouchsafe to give whatever, in thy infinite wisdom, thou shalt see to be most expedient, through Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

FOR OUR PASTOR OR PASTORS.

[To be changed from the singular to the plural, if the case requires it.]

ALMIGHTY God, Giver of all good things, who, by thy Holy Spirit, hast appointed divers orders of ministers in the Church and hast promised to be with the ministers of apostolic succession

to the end of the world; give thy grace to thy *servant* to whom thou hast committed the charge of my soul. So replenish *him* with the truth of thy doctrine, and endue *him* with innocency of life, that *he* may faithfully serve before thee, to the glory of thy great name, and the benefit of thy holy Church. Be with *him* in the performance of all the duties of *his* ministry. Fill *his* memory with the words of thy law. Enlighten *his* understanding with the illumination of the Holy Ghost. And make *him* instrumental in promoting the salvation of the people committed to *his* charge. May *he* be faithful in dispensing the divine word and sacraments, in leading the devotions of the people, in exercising the discipline of the Church, and in performing every act of pastoral function. And in all things faithfully fulfilling *his* course, may *he*, at the latter day, receive the crown of righteousness laid up by the Lord the righteous Judge, who liveth and reigneth one God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

FOR THE PARISH TO WHICH WE BELONG.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; grant that by the operation of the Holy Ghost, all Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace, that they may be an holy temple, acceptable unto thee. And especially to this parish give the abundance of thy grace; that with one heart we may desire the prosperity of thy holy apostolic Church, and with one mouth profess the faith once delivered to the saints. Defend us from the sin of heresy and schism. Let not the foot of pride come nigh to hurt us, nor the hand of the ungodly to cast us down. Enlighten our minds more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel. Graft in our hearts a love of the truth, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same. Grant that this portion of thy flock may always be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors, and that the people, waiting on their ministrations with meek heart and due reverence, may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; so that all may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TO BE USED ON THOSE DAYS ON WHICH THE HOLY COMMUNION IS TO BE ADMINISTERED.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, I render thee most humble and hearty thanks for that thou hast given thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy sacrament which He has instituted. in perpetual memory of His death and sacrifice, for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by His most blessed body and blood, and as a pledge to assure us of the remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion. I do not presume to take this holy sacrament, O merciful Lord, trusting in my own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. Grant that I may come to it, repenting me truly for my sins past, having a lively and steadfast faith in Christ my Saviour, and being in perfect charity with all men. Thus make me a meet partaker of those holy mysteries; that worthily receiving the precious body and blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, I may obtain the remission of my sins, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until I come unto thine everlasting kingdom. Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is great; not weighing my merits but pardoning my offences, through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

TO BE USED ON OCCASION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

ALMIGHTY God, through whose gracious favor a fellow being has this day been admitted, [or is about to be admitted,] by holy baptism, into the Church of Christ; called into a state of salvation, and made thy child by adoption and grace; grant that by the continual help of thy Holy Spirit *he* may be enabled alway to continue in this holy fellowship, leading the rest of *his* life according to this beginning; walking uprightly before thee in the true faith of Christ crucified, and in the sincere practice of those things which thou hast commanded—so that finally, with the residue of thy holy church *he* may be an inheritor of thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



A PLAIN AND SERIOUS

ADDRESS TO PARENTS,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

STEREOTYPED BY JAMES CONNER, FOR THE
NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY.

.....

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

PERMIT one who wishes well to you and to your children, to address you on the subject of Sunday Schools. Many thoughtful and serious Christians have set up these schools that your children might be instructed in their duty towards God and man. But unless you do something on your part, they have reason to fear that their endeavours will not be attended with that success they wish for. They do not require you to contribute any thing of what you gain by your daily labour : they cheerfully provide all that is necessary for the instruction of your children. What they desire of you is this, to take care that they shall partake of this instruction, by attending regularly, and going to school in proper time ; and they further wish, that you would ask them what they have learned, and set them good examples.

Now it cannot be expected that you will take that care which is necessary, unless you are convinced of the importance of Sunday Schools. Let me then, with all plainness and seriousness, ask you the following questions :—

1. Do you think it best to have your children playing about on a Sunday, wandering you know not where, and, for aught you can tell, in the worst of company, or to have them in a place of safety, where you know that they are at least out of harm's way ? Surely, if you love your children, it must afford you satisfaction to know that they are

at school, where they cannot do any mischief to others, nor fall into any themselves.

2. Do you think it best for them to be orderly and decent in their behaviour, or grow up in a rude, uncivilized state? Now, their regular attendance at school, and the just, though mild restraint, which they are under, will certainly promote order and decency in their behaviour.

3. Is it right that God should be worshipped by his reasonable creatures? Other creatures cannot worship, because they do not know him. But we know that he is our Maker, Governor, and Benefactor. Should we not then thank him for his benefits? And as we are exposed, on account of our sins, to his just displeasure, should we not implore his pardoning mercy and favour, through his Son, Jesus Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man? And since he has appointed one day in seven to be employed in his worship, should we not spend that day with our fellow creatures in adoring and praising our Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor, in praying for his blessings, and in acknowledging his mercies? But if your children are not taken to public worship while they are young, there is reason to believe that they will grow up strangers to the knowledge and fear of God, and of the way of salvation through his Son Jesus Christ.

4. Since God has favoured us with the Scriptures, which contain a discovery of his will: since our heavenly Father has been so kind as to inform us how to obtain the pardon of our sins, and to become good and happy through the merits and grace of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, whom he hath set forth to be the Saviour of the world: is it not desirable that your children should learn to read the word of God, and go to his house, where they may hear it read, and explained to them.

5. Do you wish to have your children dutiful or undutiful? You will at once answer, that dutiful children are the comfort and joy of their parents. You must wish that your's may prove such, that they may be thankful for the care you have taken of them, and support you in sickness and old age, if you should stand in need of their support. Now in Sunday Schools they are taught the importance of this duty, and they are informed that their heavenly Father will not love them, unless they honour and obey their earthly parents.

6. Is it not your wish that your children may prove sober and industrious: so they may shun those vices which

would bring want and disgrace both upon them and you? Is it not the desire of your hearts, that they may be comfortable, useful, and respected in those situations in which Providence may place them? But how can you expect that they will resist the temptations of sin, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, unless the fear of God be early implanted in their hearts? To fix this principle there, is one grand design of the Sunday Schools. They are taught that an all-seeing and holy God is always present with them; that he will punish them if they are wicked, and reward them if they are good.

7. Do you believe that your children must be happy or miserable in another world? Surely you know that Jesus Christ has informed us, that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction, and the righteous rewarded with everlasting happiness. Can you think that one or other of these states will be the portion of your children, without being deeply concerned for them? And should you not be desirous that they may enjoy the means of instruction and religion, that they may learn to avoid the paths of sin, which lead to hell, and to walk in the way of duty, which will lead them to heaven?

Let me ask you once more :

8. Do you believe that you are accountable to God for the instruction of your children? You know that if you refused them bread, when you had it to give them, you would be reckoned unnatural parents; and do not those deserve this name, who suffer them to want that instruction which is necessary to render them virtuous and happy? But perhaps you will say, " We are ignorant ourselves, and cannot teach our children; we are poor, and cannot pay for their being taught; all that we can do is to provide them with the necessaries of life, and we often find it difficult to do this." Now, if this be your situation, and at the same time there were no persons who would pay for your children being taught, then you might suffer them to remain in ignorance: But when a provision is made for their instruction, if you do not take care that they shall partake of it, you are guilty of sinning against your children, whom God has committed to your care.

Now let us suppose that you pay no regard to these considerations, that you are unconcerned whether your children attend Sunday Schools or not, and that through your neglect they leave off going, and instead of spending the

Lord's day in worshipping God, and learning what is good, that they spend this day in doing mischief, and learning what is bad. Let us further suppose, that from being Sabbath breakers, they become lovers of sinful pleasures, drunkards, profligates, and bring wretchedness upon themselves, and shame and grief upon you. Then you will be forced to reflect in the following manner: "Had we taken care to send our children where they would have been kept from mischief, and learned their duty towards God and man, they would most likely have been a comfort instead of a grief to us, and assisted us in bearing the burden of poverty and age."

Let me further remind you, my friends, with all solemnity, (for it is a solemn consideration,) that you will meet them again on the day of judgment. And how will you bear to hear them addressing you in such a manner as this: "O cruel parents, you neglected to instruct us, and neglected to send us where we might have been instructed. We were young and thoughtless, and not aware of the advantage of spending the Lord's day in a proper manner, but you might have known it. It is in part through your neglect that we are unfit for the happiness of heaven, and fit only for the regions of darkness and despair." What answer will you be able to make to their reproaches? You would give worlds, if you had them to give, that you had acted differently.

But if you take care that your children shall attend regularly at school, and especially if you endeavour to instruct them at home, according to the best of your abilities, and set before them good examples, you may hope that through the blessing of God, they will prove comforts to you. What joy will you feel from seeing them fill up their stations in life with usefulness and honour, which they may do, whatever those stations are. Then you will say, "Blessed be God, who put it into the hearts of his servants to establish Sunday Schools. We see and feel the happy effects of them. By hearing our children repeating their catechism and hymns, our attention is called to God, and to our duty. Thus both we and they are become better." And if this be the case, when you meet your children in another world, instead of being reproached by them, you will receive their thanks, and rejoice with them **for ever**. God grant that this may be the case. *Amen.*



OF
LIVING IN A METHOD AND BY RULE;

OR,

A REGULAR WAY OF EMPLOYING OUR TIME.

ECCLESIASTES iii. 1.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

TIME is one of those talents which our great Master has intrusted us with, to improve to his glory and our own happiness. And we should all of us be very careful how we employ our time; because we must one day most certainly give an account for it. But how little is this considered in the world? For do not most persons live as if their time was their own, and they might do what they would with it? But let none of us deceive ourselves; for we were not made to live as we list, but to serve God, and have received rules from him to direct us how to serve him. And we should so order our lives, as to be always either actually employed in serving God or in fitting ourselves for his service. This may seem a hard saying, and scarce possible to be observed by us. But would we cast our lives into a method, and bring ourselves to live by rule, we should find no such great difficulty in it: for it would only be a dividing our time between THE OFFICES OF RELIGION, THE WORKS OF OUR CALLINGS, and THE REFRESHMENTS OF OUR NATURES; and an allotting to these offices, works, and refreshments, their proper seasons; and observing at all times, so far as we can, these seasons. This seems to be recommended in the text, the motto of this tract; for it tells us that there is *to every thing a proper season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*. In speaking to these words, I shall do these following things:—

FIRST, I shall consider the nature of the things which should employ our time.

SECONDLY, I shall show what kind of method is proper to be observed by us in the dividing our time between these things.

THIRDLY, I shall give some rules to be observed by us in the performance of these things at their proper seasons; and

LASTLY, I shall offer some arguments to persuade you to endeavour to live as far as you can *in a method and by rule*.

I. I shall consider the nature of those things which should employ our time. These things are the offices of religion, the works of our callings, and the refreshments of our natures.

The first thing that should employ our time, is **THE HOLY OFFICES OF RELIGION** ; such as private and public prayer ; reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good books ; hearing the word of **GOD** read and explained by catechizing and preaching , meditating by ourselves on what we read and hear ; discoursing of it with others ; self-examination, and receiving the blessed sacrament of the **LORD'S** Supper. And these religious offices are of the greatest consequence and importance to us, because they do more immediately concern **GOD**, our souls, and another world. for they are the most solemn expressions of our subjection to **GOD**, and dependence upon him ; the blessed instruments of maintaining the greatest communication between **GOD** and our souls that we are capable of in this life, and the happy means of preparing us for the enjoyment of a more intimate and perfect union with him, in that state which is to come. They are, as our blessed **LORD** tells us, Luke x. 42, *the one thing needful, that better part which can never be taken from us* ; for they tend to improve us in all those graces and virtues in this world, which we shall carry along with us into the other. And this obligeth us to spend so much of our time in these holy offices, as we can spare from the proper works of our callings, and the necessary refreshments of our natures ; to spend some part of every day, a greater part of the Festival and Fast Days, and the greatest part of the **Lord's** Day in them. This is the best and most useful way of employing our time ; for this will improve our short time in this world into a blessed eternity in the next.

The second thing which should employ our time is, **THE WORKS OF OUR CALLINGS**. Though there be no more than one general calling, the calling of religion, which we are all of us admitted into, and do all of us make profession of, yet there are a great many particular callings which we are brought up to and placed in. And these particular callings are of different kinds, for some do require the labour of the body, others the labour of the mind, and others the labour of both body and mind. And every particular calling hath some peculiar work and employment belonging to it. And every person should spend so much of his time as he can spare from the holy offices of religion, and the necessary refreshments of nature, in the works of his own calling ; for this is what **GOD** hath by nature given us faculties for, and does by his word oblige us to. And this is necessary both for ourselves and for the world. It is necessary for ourselves, to keep us from idleness, which otherwise we should fall into and be ruined by. For we are active beings, made for action, and if we be not employed in that which is good, we shall be employed for that which is ill. And this is necessary for the world too, to minister to those many wants and necessities which all mankind are liable to and do labour under ; for the world subsists upon labour—upon the labour of the body and the mind, and is upholden by it : and without it the whole earth would soon become one great wilderness, and all mankind must in a short time perish

from off the face of it. We are, indeed, chiefly made for another world, but we must take this in our way to it; and whilst we are in this world, we must be supported and maintained in it; and this support and maintenance is owing to God's blessing upon the labours of men.

The third thing which should employ our time, is **THE NECESSARY REFRESHMENTS OF OUR NATURES**. Such is the state of our souls and bodies in this world, that they cannot subsist without daily refreshments; for our bodies are continually wasting, and often oppressed with weariness, and must be supported by frequent supplies of nourishment, and constant returns of rest. And our souls do so much depend upon our bodies, that they cannot continue long in any earnest exercises, or busy employments, but they must be now and then relieved by some little unbendings and diversions. This makes it necessary for us to spend some of our time in the necessary refreshments of our souls and bodies, that we may be enabled to perform the offices of religion with a becoming vigour, and the works of our callings with a suitable diligence.

And thus I have gone through the first thing propounded, and considered the nature of those things which should employ our time, the offices of religion, the works of our callings, and the refreshments of our natures.

I shall proceed to the

II. Second thing propounded, and show what kind of method is proper to be observed by us in the dividing our time between these things. Since we have many things to do, and cannot do them all together and at once, but must do them successively one after another, we should range them all into some kind of order and method, and allot to each of them their distinct times and seasons. Now the proper method would be, to begin the day with pious meditation, devout prayers, and careful reading some portion of Scripture, and other good books, so far as we are capable of it, and have leisure for it, always thanking God for his preservation of us the night past, commending ourselves to the protection of his grace and providence the present day, and resolving, with his help, to serve him in it, by doing those duties we shall have an opportunity of, and avoiding those sins we shall be tempted to. And after this, we shall proceed to the works and business of our callings, allotting, at convenient distances of time, such portions of it as are necessary for the refreshment of our natures: mingling with both our work and refreshment such pious meditations and devout ejaculations as may sanctify both to us; and then we should conclude the day as we began it, with some holy offices, such as diligent reading, pious meditations, careful self-examination, and devout prayer; always thanking God for the good we have done or received, confessing to him the sins we have committed, and the duties we have neglected, imploring of him the forgiveness of them, resolving against them for the time to come, committing ourselves to the care of his

good providence the night present, and employing our waking portions of it in some short acts of praise, thanksgiving, or prayer. Some such method as this we should prescribe to ourselves, and observe, so far as we can, in the spending of our ordinary days. And though the great duties of religion should be done by us every day, and we should every day worship God, and every day commemorate his benefits, and every day reflect on our sins, yet a private exercise of these duties is not sufficient; for both the honour of God and edification of ourselves and others do require a public performance of them. And therefore God himself and the Church, by an authority from him, have set apart some solemn days for the public administration of the holy offices of religion, and do oblige all persons to a constant and regular performance of them. These days are the Lord's Days, and the Festivals and Fasts of the Church. And as we should, upon these days, employ ourselves more in the service of God and less in our own, so we should lay aside all our worldly business on the Lord's Days, and abate, if we can conveniently, some part of it on the other days, that we may have leisure to meet together in public, and join in those offices which are there administered; and to enlarge our devotions in private, by adding to them such prayers, reading, and meditations, as are suitable to the occasions; always praising and thanking God for the mercies commemorated in the Festivals, and beseeching him to give us grace, to live answerable to those mercies; and confessing and lamenting those sins which we are to be humbled for on the Fasts, and beseeching God to show mercy towards us, and to turn away from us the judgments which we have deserved by those sins. These are the great ends for which these days were set apart by God and his Church, and we should employ so much as we can of these days to these ends, in obedience to their institution of them. And to encourage us in this holy employment, we should consider, that the more time we spend in the worship and service of God, the greater comfort we shall find in it in this world, and the greater reward we shall receive for it in that world which is to come.

And thus I have gone through the second thing propounded, and shown you what kind of method is proper to be observed by us in the dividing our time between the offices of religion, the works of our callings, and the refreshments of our natures. I shall now proceed to the

III. Third thing propounded, and give you some rules to be observed in the performance of these things at their proper seasons.

The first of them, wherein some portion of our time should be employed, are the holy offices of religion; and the rules which I shall give to be observed by you in the exercise of these offices, are these following ones:—

1. Be faithful and constant in these holy offices at their proper seasons, and never omit them, unless you be taken off from them

by some work of necessity or charity ; for the return of the proper season of these holy offices lays an obligation upon you to perform them ; and consequently to neglect them at that time, either through wilfulness or carelessness, is a breach of that obligation. Besides, by a constant performance of these holy offices at their proper seasons, we shall bring ourselves to a *habit* of performing them ; and that, by degrees, will make it so easy and delightful to us to perform them, that it will at length be as great an uneasiness to be kept from these holy offices, as it was at first to be brought to them ; for it will fare us in these our devotions, as it does in our common meals, we shall find something in ourselves to put us in mind of them, and call us to them at their set times.

2. Be very reverent, attentive, and devout in your performance of these holy offices. The offices of religion are holy offices, offices separated from common and consecrated to sacred uses. This makes a mighty difference between these holy offices of religion and the common actions of the world, and you should take care to preserve this distinction between them, by a suitable behaviour at them. For to carry ourselves in the public churches as we do in private houses ; to speak to God as we do to one another ; to hear his holy word as we do common talk ; and to receive the blessed sacrament as we do an ordinary meal, is very unsuitable to the greatness of his majesty, the sacredness of his house, and the holiness of his institutions. This is to confound all distinctions of persons and things, and to make all places and actions alike ; and would in a little time leave no such thing as any divine worship in the world : for to worship God is to honour him ; but we cannot be said to honour him, unless we show a peculiar regard to him in all our communications with him. And therefore you should take care, all possible care, to perform all the holy offices of religion in a holy manner, in such a manner as is some way suitable to the nature of them, with the most composed temper of mind, and awful behaviour of body, to show that you are serious and in good earnest in them, and do mind what you are about, and whom you are concerned with.

3. Do not rest in a bare performance of these holy offices, but have a due regard to the effect of them upon your hearts and lives : for the great end of these holy offices is to instruct you in the will of God, and to enable you to live according to that blessed will. Thus you should hear the word of God, to learn from thence what it is which he requires of you, that you may make it your great care and endeavour to perform it. You should join in the prayers of the Church, to obtain from God his help, to enable you to serve him, by doing every thing you know he commands, and avoiding every thing you know he forbids : and you should receive the holy sacrament, to lay a new obligation upon yourselves, to make good the terms of your baptismal covenant with God, and to receive from him fresh supplies of grace to strengthen you in the fulfilling that obligation.

This is what you should all aim at in the use of these holy offices; and unless you receive these benefits from them, you do but deceive yourselves in the use of them; for the great end of these holy offices is a holy life. They are only the means to bring you to it and improve you in it. And if you do not perform them in such a manner as to make yourselves holy by them, they are no more than empty forms and insignificant actions. For the best means in the world signify nothing to us, any further than they produce and promote the end they were appointed for. And, therefore, you should not rest in a bare performance of these holy offices, but make it your great care and endeavour to improve yourselves by them in all those graces and virtues which the gospel requires of us.

The second thing wherein some portion of our time should be employed, is the works of our callings. And I beg you to observe, in the performance of these works, the following

RULES.

1. Be honest and conscientious in the works of your calling. The great end of your calling is, to make you useful and profitable members of the world, by ministering to the necessities and conveniences of it. And the way for you to answer this end is by an honest and conscientious discharge of the works of your callings; the doing by others, in those works, as you would they should do by you, were you in their circumstances and they in yours; for this will make you useful to all those who have any dealings with you. Never, then, oppress or overreach one another, but make a conscience of whatever you do: and then your callings will become a great blessing to the world, and yourselves the happy instruments of promoting the good and welfare of it.

2. Be diligent and careful in the works of your callings; for you are all no more than servants in the great family of this world to your LORD and Master, the Almighty Governor of it. And the works of your several callings are the business he has intrusted you with, and obliged you to. And you should not be idle and negligent in your business, but careful and diligent; because care and diligence are the duties of servants, and what every master expects from them.

3. Look up to GOD in all the works of your callings, and beg his blessing upon them; for though your own care and diligence be necessary, because GOD governs the world by means, yet it is his blessing which must crown your care and diligence with success, and give a happy issue to them; because it is not the means which do give that good issue and success. but GOD by those means.

4. Be not too anxious or over solicitous in the works of your callings. For it is your business only to take a prudent care and use a proper diligence, and beg GOD's blessing upon your care and diligence, and then to leave the issue to the all-wise disposal of GOD's providence; because that is his work, and not

your's. Do then your part, what belongs to you ; and leave God to do his, what belongs to him : and do not perplex and disquiet yourselves about the issue of your affairs, but rest satisfied that they are in much better hands than your own, and will be ordered for you far better than you could order them for yourselves.

The third thing wherein some portion of our time must be employed, is the refreshments of our natures. And I shall beg you to observe, in these refreshments, these following

RULES.

1. Be temperate in your diet, and eat not to indulge and gratify a nice palate, or a wanton appetite, but to serve the real necessities of your natures, to repair the decays of your bodies, and to continue them in health and strength sufficient to discharge your particular duties to God, your neighbour, and yourselves.

2. Observe at all times the rules and measures of Christian temperance—Drink but to quench your thirst and digest your food, so that you may freely ask God's blessing in what you do, and never allow depressed spirits, melancholy, or worldly trouble, to drive you from sobriety and the path of duty to yourself, your family, and your God.

3. Be moderate in your sleep, and use it only to relieve the weariness of your bodies, and the faintness of your spirits ; not to indulge a slothful temper, or a habit of laziness.

4. Be regular in your recreations and diversions ; use none but lawful ones ; and those purely to refresh your tired spirits, and to make you the more fit for business, not to take a great part of your time from off your hands, and to become a trade and employment to you.

And thus I have given you some few short rules to be observed by you in the performance of the holy offices of religion, the works of your callings, and the refreshments of your natures at their proper seasons ; and shall now proceed to the last thing propounded, which was,

IV. Fourthly, and lastly, to offer some arguments to persuade you to endeavour to live, as far as you can, in a method and by rule. And these arguments shall be taken from the advantages of such an orderly and regular life. Now, many and great are the advantages of such a life ; but I can only set before you a few of them, and I must be very short in them too, because the time will not allow me to be long.

ADVANTAGES OF A REGULAR LIFE.

1. The first advantage of such a regular life is, the bringing us to a fixedness and constancy of temper ; we are naturally fickle and inconstant, always running from one thing to another, and never fixing long upon any thing. But the living for some time in a method, and by rule, will correct this fickleness and inconstancy of temper, and bring us to a habit of steadiness and constancy.

2. The second advantage of such a regular life is, the giving us the greater facility or easiness in doing every thing well ; for

by often beginning the same thing, and doing it over and over again, we get a habit of doing it; and what we do by habit we do with a great deal of readiness and ease: and what we do readily and easily, we generally do well.

3. The third advantage of such a regular life is, the making us the more perfect in what we do: for it is become a common saying amongst us, that "practice makes perfect." And this saying is founded upon a general observation or experience in all wordly affairs. And this is as true in religious ones too; for we proceed there from acts to habits of virtue; and the oftener we perform the act of any virtue, the sooner we shall attain to a habit of that virtue, and the more perfect we shall grow in that habit. So that by a daily exercise of piety and devotion in the holy offices of religion; of honesty, and diligence in the works of our callings; of moderation and sobriety in the refreshments of our natures; we shall still more and more improve ourselves in these virtues, and rise by degrees to the greatest perfection in them.

4. The fourth advantage of such a regular life, is the sanctifying all our time, and the making our whole lives to be a continual service of GOD; because, whatsoever we are about, will be either a part of his service, or in order to it. The acts of religion, and the works of our callings, will be an actual serving of GOD; and our eating and drinking, and even our recreations, will be a fitting ourselves for his service. And thus our whole time may be, in some measure, sanctified and employed in the service of our GOD.

5. And, lastly, the fifth advantage of such a regular life, is a preparing and fitting ourselves for a blessed eternity: because by thus dividing our time between the offices of religion, the works of our callings, and the refreshments of our natures, and allotting to these offices, works, and refreshments, their proper seasons, and observing at all times, as far as we can, those seasons, we shall be able to give a good account of our time, when we are, at the last day, called to it: and may then expect to receive from our great LORD and Master the reward of it, in that joyful sentence—*Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD.*

And now, what remains for me to do more at this time, than to beseech Almighty GOD, to give us all grace so to improve our short time in this world, that we may receive the reward of it in a blessed eternity, in that world which is to come, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

No. 18.

NEW-YORK:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY;



THE

TROUBLESOME GARDEN,

OR,

EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL.

The whole ground must be new made : the trees must be trees of the Lord's right hand planting : the thorns and the briers must be plucked up by better strength than your own.

John. Good morrow, neighbour : why, you are in your Garden betimes this morning.

James. Yes, John ; but, early as I am, something here keeps ahead of me—something that is at work while I am asleep.

John. I take your meaning, James ; for, diligent as you are, I will be bound those weeds you are at, are busier still. They plague me almost to death in my bit of ground. One may weed, weed, weed, and up they come afresh, as if the ground was made of weeds. I have often wondered where they all come from. There is trouble enough to raise any good seed, but weeds can grow any where and every where ; by night or by day, wet or dry, some weed or other will manage to grow.

James. True, John, there is only one thing that I know of which will come up to them in all this.

John. Well, and what is that, neighbour ? nothing good I warrant ; at least I never met with it.

James. You are right there, John ; it is indeed nothing good, but an accursed and evil thing ; and it was all owing to this that thorns, and briers, and weeds, are so plentiful in the world.

John. Indeed, neighbour ! Well, and pray what is it ? for I will set my face against it for ever, when I discover what it is that has caused me all this trouble.

James. Ah, take care, John! you are vowing vengeance against something which sticks as close to you as the flesh does to your bones.

John. Now what can that be, James? I am greatly mistaken if I like any thing that gives me so much trouble. Do tell me what it is.

James. Don't be offended with me, neighbour, then, when I tell you it is sin. The earth was never told to bring forth thorns and thistles, till after sin had entered into it: this is part of the curse that sinful man brought upon this poor world, as you may read in the third chapter of Genesis.

John. Aye; I have read about Adam and Eve, and have been sorry often enough for what they have brought upon us. I know pretty well what it is to eat bread in the sweat of my face, with such a family as I have to provide for; and, to tell you the truth, James, I have thought it rather hard that I should suffer so for the folly of our first parents.

James. And do you think you have never earned the curse for yourself, my dear John? have you never been guilty of one sin or one folly—one idle word—one broken sabbath—one angry feeling—one impure thought? Have you never, for one moment, been wanting in love to God, or to your neighbour? Have you never thought about any thing, or loved any thing, more than you have thought about and loved God? Nay, have you never wished for that which he forbids, and loved the very thing that brought trouble into the world?

John. Why, indeed, when we come to measure ourselves in this way, I don't know who doesn't come short. But why should you charge it so heavy on me, James? I am no worse than my neighbours; I think I work as hard for my family as most men, and pay my way better than most; and though I may be a little rash sometimes, yet I have a good heart at bottom.

James. You were complaining bitterly of your piece of ground just now, John; if you will have a little patience with me, I think I can show you something that deserves to have more fault found with it than your weedy ground, and that is nothing further off from you than your own heart.

John. Come, come, neighbour, you are running on a little too fast there: I never yet was accused of a bad heart, and I shall not be brought very soon to believe that I have one.

James. Indeed, John, I am not the first to accuse you. One who can see the naked heart, and all that comes up in it, tells me that it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. (*Jer. xvii. 9.*)

John. That may be the case with some, but it does not hold good of mine, I think, James.

James. Do you believe, John, that God knows the heart?

John. To be sure I do: he knows all things.

James. Do you believe that he speaks the truth?

John. Why, James, I am not the man to accuse my Maker of being a liar, whatever you may think of me.

James. Nay, my dear John, don't be angry; I only wanted to remind you that it is God's account of your heart, and that he can neither lie nor make a mistake. Now he says, "There is none righteous, no not one." He was at the pains, as I may say, to look down from heaven, to search every heart, and every dark corner of the heart, "as with candles;" and the report he makes is, "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one. (*Psalm* xiv. 2, 3; *Rom.* iii.) "they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." (*Jer.* iv. 22.)

John. Well, I dare not give God the lie, but I must own I had not quite such a poor opinion of my heart as all this comes to. If I could believe this, James, I have more need to set to work upon my heart, than upon my troublesome piece of ground. But, for my part, I don't know what bad weeds I have to pull out of my heart, not I.

James. If you did not want to have good crops in your garden, John, you would be content to let weeds grow, and stones lie: and I am half afraid the reason that the stones and weeds in your heart have not troubled you is, because you have had no concern to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the glory of God.

John. Well, I can't say I have ever thought much about these fruits, James, more than, as I said before, being a quiet, civil neighbour, and so on.

James. Ah! I was satisfied with this myself for many a year; but I find that God looks for something besides this. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." (*Gal.* v. 22.) Now when I wanted to see a good crop of love to God in my heart, I was not a little disturbed to find the ground overrun with love to this world, but, most of all, to self; and indeed the roots of these weeds have struck so deep, that with all my care and all my labour, they are continually springing up, and taking the place of the love of God in my heart. Then, as to joy, why I used to fancy myself merry and happy sometimes, when I was in pleasant company, and saw things going on pretty well in my family; but as for the fruit of spiritual joy—that is, of joy in the Lord—why I had no more of that in me than this piece of earth has. Well, and as for peace, why I could be pretty peaceful when all went on smoothly; but as for "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," you could not have found a sprig of it in my heart; and then as to——

John. Hold, neighbour: this is all new to me. I am not quite so well satisfied with myself as I was; for if these are the fruits God is looking for, I must confess there is a very poor crop in me; and it would seem that the love, and joy, and peace, I now have,

have more need to be pulled up as rank weeds, than to be prized as good fruit.

James. When my eyes were opened to see these things, I found that no farmer, with the most wretched piece of ground, covered with stones and weeds, had so much to do as I had. I heard the command, "Break up your fallow ground: sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy:" (*Hos. x. 12.*) and I heard God declare, that "the ground which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (*Heb. vi. 8.*) You may think I was not very easy with such a work to do, and with such a threatening. The more I tried at my job, the less I seemed to get on. The weeds of sin, with being let alone so long, had taken strong root in the very middle of my heart. Nay, the whole piece seemed like a heap of weeds and rubbish: while I was trying to get up one, another would grow from the very place; so that my work appeared almost hopeless: and, more than all this, the ground was so hard, it was like working upon the very stones, or ploughing upon a rock.

John. And pray what did you do then, James? I am afraid, though I am as good a workman as any far or near for this world, I should soon have given up this heart job.

James. Aye, neighbour, and so should I, but that I found an Almighty Helper: he undertook for me; and, to my great joy, to begin with, I found just such a promise as I wanted: it was this, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh." (*Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*) This, coming from that God who never deceived any one, was as good as a thousand pounds to me: and when again I was cast down and disheartened by seeing how many hindrances there were—how Satan watched to carry away every grain of good seed, so that if I would keep it, I must needs be on my watch night and day, and out-watch Satan—and when I found, too, how ready the weeds still were to spring up and choke the good seed—how earthly thoughts would creep in, when I was trying hard to fix my mind on heavenly things; I say, when I found all this, you may well think I was never so anxious over a crop in my garden, as I was over my own heart.

John. And what was it that cheered you, neighbour, with all these difficulties?

James. Why, I used to look round me, and see some good farmers who had brought some very bad pieces of ground to yield a pretty good crop at last. I saw, too, that the best of ground needed constant care and weeding. I found that though the farmer had many enemies to the seed he sowed—the birds from above, and worms and insects from beneath—and though many times you would expect that it must be rotted with wet, dried up with heat, or spoiled by nipping winds, yet if he had long patience, with the blessing of God he got something of a crop at last. But what comforted me most was this saying, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (*Ps. cxxvi. 5.*)

John. Well, neighbour, you are a nappy fellow, for it seems you are likely to make a good harvest of it at last. I cannot pretend to do all that you do, but I trust I shall be the better man for what I have heard this morning. I mean to try and mend in some things; and I hope I shall come off pretty well at last; though I may not have such a fine harvest as I expect you will.

James. Ah! neighbour, I often think mine will be the poorest crop among those of the happy and wise husbandmen. Yet I desire to be thankful if my heart is made to bring forth thirty fold to the glory of God; though I must say I should be much better satisfied to see it bring forth a hundred fold; but I know if I reap at all, it will be in rich and free mercy. The new ground is of the Lord's making: the good seed is from him: the power to watch and pray is his gift: so if I may but bring in one sheaf, as it were, at last, I should cast it at his dear feet, and declare that He alone is worthy to receive all the blessing, and honour, and glory. But now, neighbour, I have a little more to say to you: if I were to go past your garden, and see you trying to make some good seed grow in the midst of thorns and weeds, what should I say to you?

John. Say! why if you saw me such a fool as that, I should expect you to say, "John, don't you sow among thorns: why don't you dig up your ground, and get it ready first!"

James. Well, John, that is just what I would say to you now: nay, it is what the great Husbandman says to you, "Sow not among thorns." (*Jer.* iv. 3.) "Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit." (*Ezek.* xviii. 31.)

John. Why, James, you might as well tell me to make a new world, I think; or to turn a wilderness into a beautiful garden.

James. I am happy to hear you say this, neighbour. Some seem to think it a very easy thing to make a new heart; but He whose work it is, well knows that it is not in the power of a man to do it. He tells us, "The preparation of the heart is of the Lord:" (*Prov.* xvi. 1.) and then for our comfort he says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;" (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 26.) So don't you think, neighbour, to put in a plant, or a few seeds, here and there—to mend in this and that, and so get a crop: the whole ground must be new made: the trees must be trees of the Lord's right hand planting: the thorns and the briars must be plucked up by better strength than your own: so shall the wilderness become an Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord: old things will pass away, and all things will become new.

John. Well, if this is work that the Lord undertakes, I begin to hope that something may be done even for me: but I declare I hardly know how or where to set about all this. I see now that I understand better how to take care of my garden, than of my own heart.

James. The first step, John, is to feel our own weakness and

ignorance, because that drives you to the Strong for strength, and to the only wise God for wisdom : and you need not fear to go to him, for he has said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." (*John* vi. 37.) And to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Again he says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." (*James* i. 5.) He has been wonderfully patient and kind to you these many years, and has sent his rain and made his sun to shine on one, who cared not to bring him one good fruit ; and do you think he will cast you off, now that he has given you a desire to serve him ?

John. Why, I should hope not, James ; but I never felt so out of sorts with myself before : I complained of my ground—the Lord have mercy upon me ! How much has he to say against me ! poor ungrateful sinner that I have been for these many years.

James. I hope, neighbour, that your cry for mercy is sincere, and then, while you are yet speaking, the Lord will hear : he delighteth in mercy : he can bring under those rank weeds that have choked up your heart, for he has undertaken to subdue iniquities, and to cleanse from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. But do not forget the words of Jesus, "Without me ye can do nothing." (*John* xv. 5.) And oh ! that your soul might pant for him, as the earth gapes for rain after a long drought.

John. Well, I certainly will beg him to set all to rights in my wilderness, as you well call it, James : and then I suppose if I get new ground—I mean a new heart—I shall have no more trouble with it.

James. Nay, neighbour, I never promised you that : that is more than you can say of the best piece of ground, or the best tree in your garden. As long as we are in this world, we shall have weeds springing up in our hearts, as fast as they do in the best ground ; and as sure as a tree wants frequent cutting and pruning, to make it more fruitful, so surely do we want pruning, that we may bring forth more fruit.

John. Ah, James, you are getting too deep for me : I am afraid I shall never understand all this.

James. Do not be discouraged, neighbour : get the Lord to be your teacher, and he will make darkness light before you ; but I will try to be a little plainer. When God is pleased to put a new heart, and a right spirit within us, we shall indeed be new creatures in our thoughts, words, and actions ; but then the old heart still remains, though it is kept under ; and it will remain too till we drop this poor body—this heap of weeds and corruption—into the grave. Now this is the reason that the best of God's children are forced to cry, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." (*Rom.* vii. 21.) This drives them to their God day by day, and hour by hour, crying, "My misdoings prevail against me : help thou me ! Lord undertake for me." This makes them fearful of being in the company of the ungodly, lest they should hear or see

something that will make their corruptions grow stronger: and this makes them pray heartily, "Lead us not into temptation."

John. Well, now I can understand you better; and you put me in mind of a gentleman, who did not like to buy a field, because it lay next to one which belonged to a lazy farmer, and which therefore grew little else but thistles. The gentleman said, if he tried ever so hard to keep his own field clean, the thistle-down flew so thick upon it from his neighbour's field, that it was like lost labour.

James. Well said, John; this is indeed a good lesson for us, and should teach us to avoid the company of the ungodly, and the seat of scorers. No thistle-down can fly faster than sin does; and it cares not what soil it lights upon—there it will grow; and much trouble does it give to get rid of it again.

John. If I had thought of this before, and had had much concern to keep the ground within clean, I should not have kept company with some that you know I have been pretty thick with. I take it, this is the reason you are so careful what company you keep now. I could not think why you must always keep aloof from some of our pleasant neighbours so much.

James. Since I have had a concern about my soul, they have been no more pleasant to me, than the idle farmer's field was to the gentleman you were speaking of: and the command of my God has sounded loud in my ears, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." (2 Cor. vi. 17.)

John. Well, it does seem that there is no such thing as mending by halves, James; if the ground is new, company and all must be new. I begin to think, even if I could get this new heart, I should never be able to keep it in any order. I doubt I shall not make such a good gardener here as in my little garden, which I have kept pretty neat, and well cropped, though I say it.

James. Indeed, John, if we were left to keep it and crop it ourselves, we should come off but badly; but he who gives the ground undertakes to watch over it: he promises to "keep it every moment:" yea, says He, "lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." He has engaged also to keep it well watered, and to cause the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon it, not with scorching rays, but with healing in his wings. (Mal. iv. 2.) He will fence it around, to keep out every enemy. The Holy Spirit, the Author and Giver of life, who is compared in Scripture to the wind, shall breathe upon it, and cause it to abound in fruit more and more.

John. God grant it may be so, neighbour! I little thought, when I was so busy in my garden last night, what a much more important job I was neglecting: I wish I may find all the health you speak of, James.

James. And I dare promise you, that you will, neighbour, if you seek in good earnest. I expect one day to hear you saying with humble thanksgiving and joy, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) Remember this is where all your help is to be found, John. Make Christ your all in

all, and the more fruit you bring forth, the more you will be inclined to cast it all at the feet of the great Husbandman, and cry "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth sake." (*Ps. cxv. 1.*) It is indeed He who turns the wilderness into a fruitful field: it is He who waters, keeps, and defends it: it is He alone who can make us fruitful in any good desire, word, or work; and to his name be the praise and the glory for ever and ever.

John. Well, good morning, neighbour, I must now get to my work; but I hope the very ground I labour upon, will, in future, preach me many a good sermon, and help me to remember what you have been saying.

James. Good morning, John: I hope, indeed, that, for the time to come, every weed you see, and every little corner of your garden, will cry to you—LOOK WITHIN.

LORD of the harvest! GOD of grace!

Send down thy heavenly rain;
In vain we plant without thine aid,
And water too in vain.

May no vain thoughts, those birds of prey
Defraud us of our gain;
Nor anxious cares, those baleful thorns,
Choak up the precious grain.

Ne'er may our hearts be like the rock,
Where but the blade can spring;
Which, scorched with heat, becomes by noon
A dead, a useless thing.

Let not the joys thy Gospel gives
A transient rapture prove;
Nor may the world by smiles and frowns
Our faith and hope remove.

But may our hearts, like fertile soil,
Receive thy heavenly word;
So shall our fair and ripened fruit
Their hundred fold afford.

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RECORDS OF THE CHURCH..

THE HOLY CHURCH THROUGHOUT ALL THE WORLD
DOTH ACKNOWLEDGE THEE.

Account of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne.

(From the Church History of Eusebius.)

IN the seventeenth year of the Emperor Antoninus Verus, the persecution raged with fresh violence against us, in some parts of the world, by means of the attacks made on us by the populace of the several cities. We may conjecture, from what occurred in a single country, that myriads of martyrdoms took place throughout the earth. These are well worthy of immortal memory, and happen to have been transmitted to posterity in writing. The whole document, which contains the fullest account of them, is placed in my collection of Martyrs, containing a description which is not merely historical, but also instructive. As much, however, as is connected with my present purpose, I will select and insert here.

Others, in composing historical narrations, commit to writing victories in war, and trophies over the enemy, and the exploits of generals, and the valour of troops stained with blood and endless slaughter, in defence of their children, their country, and their fortunes. But our narrative of the acts of a Divine Commonwealth, will rather seek to inscribe, on an everlasting monument, those most peaceful wars for the peace of the soul; and the Heroes who have fought in these, rather for the truth than for their country, and rather for religion than for the objects of their dearest affections. It will proclaim, for eternal memory, the perseverance, and the enduring valour of the combatants in the cause of Piety, and their trophies over devils, and their victories over unseemly adversaries, and their crowns which followed.

Gaul [i. e. France] then was the place of the conflicts of which we speak. The principal cities of this country, remarkable and celebrated above others, are Lyons and Vienne, through both which runs the stream of the Rhone, which passes with a rapid

course round that whole region. The account of the martyrdoms, transmitted by the Churches of chief note in these parts to those in Asia and Phrygia, thus describes the things done among them; and I will give their own words.

*Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne in the South of France
to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia.*

The Servants of CHRIST, that sojourn at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, to the Brethern in Asia and Phrygia, who have the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace, and grace, and glory, from GOD the FATHER, and CHRIST JESUS our LORD. * *

* * The greatness of the sufferings in this country, and the wonderful rage of the heathen against the Saints, and how much the blessed Martyrs endured, we are neither able accurately to declare, nor is it possible to be comprehended in writing. For the Adversary rushed down upon us with all his might, as already anticipating his future coming without controul;* and went through all possible means in preparing, and exercising his own beforehand, against the Servants of GOD. So that we were not only excluded from the houses, the baths, and the market; but it was even forbidden for any of us to show himself, in any place, whatever.

But the Grace of GOD took the lead in opposition to him; and, protecting the weak, set Firm Pillars in battle array against him, whose fortitude rendered them first to draw on themselves the whole violence of the Evil One; men who went forth to meet him, supporting patiently every kind of insult and torture, and counting the most he could do as little, were in haste to be with CHRIST; showing, of a truth, that "the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

And, in the first place, they nobly endured all the injuries heaped on them by the assembled populace, who hooted, beat, dragged about, plundered, stoned, and confined them; and did all such things, as are wont to be done by a furious mob to those, whom it hates and counts its enemies. And, lastly, when brought into the market-place by the commander of the troops and the authorities of the city, and questioned before the whole multitude, they confessed, and were shut up in prison till the arrival of the Governor.

And when afterwards they were brought before the Governor, and he showed the utmost cruelty towards us, Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, (full of love toward GOD and his neighbour, and of so exact and perfect a life, that though a young man, he

was equal to the testimony borne to the aged Zacharias, in that he "walked in all the commandments and judgments of the LORD blameless," and ready in every service to his neighbour, having great "zeal toward God," and "servent in spirit,") this excellent man could not endure the unreasonable judgment, which was passing against us, but testified his indignation, and demanded to be heard himself in defence of the Brethren. And when those about the tribunal hooted him down, (for he was a man of note,) and the Governor would not allow the just claim he had put in on our behalf, but only asked if he too were a Christian, he confessed with a loud voice, and was himself taken, and so took his place among the number of the Martyrs; being called the Advocate of the Christians, and having in himself the "ADVOCATE," (or the Comforter, John xiv. 16.) the SPIRIT, yet more than Zacharias, (Luke i. 67.) Which he also showed by the fulness of his love, being ready to lay down his own life for the sake of defending his Brethren. For he was, yea, is, a genuine disciple of CHRIST, "following the Lamb wherever He goeth."

Then also others began to be distinguishable; and the First Martyrs were conspicuous and prepared, fulfilling with all readiness the Martyr's confession. Those also might be discerned who were unprepared and unexercised, and still weak, unable to bear the strain of a great conflict. About ten of whom fell away; who also caused us much grief and unmeasured lamentation, and hindered the readiness of others, who were not yet arrested, and who, though suffering all possible indignities, were in attendance on the Martyrs, and did not desert them. Then, however, we were all greatly alarmed by the uncertainty of the confession; not fearing the cruelties that were inflicted, but looking to the end, and fearing that any one might fall away.

Those, however, who were worthy, were daily apprehended, filling up their number, so that there were taken up, from the two Churches, all the best men, and those, by whom things here were chiefly kept together. There were also taken up some heathen servants belonging to persons amongst our number, since the Governor ordered a public inquisition to be made after us all. And they, by a device of Satan, fearing the tortures which they saw the Saints endure, the soldiers urging them on, belied us as holding Thyestean feasts,* and guilty of impurities like those of Oedipus, and such things as it is not allowed us to mention, or even to think of, no, nor to believe that they ever existed among mankind.

But when these things were noised abroad, all were infuriated against us; so that, even if any had before shown moderation on account of connections, even these were greatly enraged, and stung with malice (Acts v. 33.) against us. And that was fulfilled which the LORD had foretold us, (John xvi. 2.) "the time shall

* I. e. Eating human flesh, a calumny derived from the Lord's Supper.

come, when every one, that killeth you, shall think that he doeth God service." Then afterwards the Holy Martyrs endured tortures beyond all description; Satan being ambitious of drawing some to blaspheme with their lips.

But most eminently did all the rage of the populace, the Governor, and the soldiers, light on Sanctus, a deacon of Vienne; and on Maturus, one newly enlightened, but a noble champion; and on Attalus, a Pergamene by birth, who had always been "a pillar and support"* of those in this neighbourhood; and on Blandina, by whom CHRIST showed that the things which are lowly esteemed among men, and held by them mean and contemptible, are thought worthy of great honour with God, for that love of Him, which is showed forth in power, and does not boast in a vain appearance.

For when we all were in fear, and her own mistress according to the flesh, (who also herself was one champion among the Martyrs,) was in agony for her, lest she should be unable to make even one bold confession, from the weakness of her body; Blandina was filled with such strength, that even those, who tortured her by turns, in every possible way, from morning till evening, were wearied and gave it up, themselves confessing that they were conquered, having nothing more that they could do to her. And they wondered at her remaining still alive, her whole body being mangled and pierced in every part; and declared, that any one kind of torture was enough to deprive her of life, not to say so many and so severe.

But that blessed woman, like a brave wrestler, renewed her strength in confessing; and it was to her recovery, and rest, and ease from her sufferings, to say, "I am a Christian, and nothing vile is done amongst us."

Sanctus also, for his part, enduring exceedingly, and above every man, all the cruelties of men with a noble patience, when the wicked hoped that, by means of the continuance and severity of the tortures, they should hear something from him that ought not to be uttered, set himself against them with such firmness as not to mention even his own name, nor that of the nation or city whence he was, nor whether he were bond or free; but to all questions he answered in the Roman tongue, "I am a Christian." This he repeatedly declared to be to him instead of a name, instead of a country, and instead of a family; but no other word did the heathen hear from him. Whence also there was great strife both of the Governor and torturers against him; so that, when they had nothing left that they could do to him, at last they fastened red hot plates of brass on the tenderest parts of his body. But though his limbs were burning, he remained upright and unshrinking, steadfast to his confession, bathed and strengthened from Heaven with that fountain of living water, that springs from the well of CHRIST

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

But his body bore witness of what had been done, being one entire wound and bruise, and wrenched, and deprived of the external form of man. In whom CHRIST Himself suffering showed forth great glory, confounding the adversary, and showing, for an example to others, that nothing is terrible where is the love of the FATHER; nothing painful where is the glory of CHRIST. For when the ungodly again, after several days, tortured the Martyr, and thought that they should overcome him by applying the same torments while his wounds were yet swollen and sore, and could scarce bear the mere touch of the hand; or that by dying under the torture he would at least alarm the rest; not only did no such thing befall him, but also, contrary to all human expectation, his frail body recovered and was strengthened in his latter torments, and regained its former appearance, and the use of the limbs; so that, by the favour of CHRIST, his second torture was made to him no punishment, but a remedy.

And then the Devil, thinking he had already swallowed up one woman of the number of those, who had denied CHRIST, named Biblias, led her to the torture, to compel her to say impious things concerning us, as one now easily to be broken, and without courage. But she came to herself under the tortures, and awoke, so to speak, from a deep sleep; being reminded by temporal punishment of the eternal misery of hell; and declared, in contradiction of the blasphemers, "How should those devour children, with whom it is not allowed even to eat the blood of brute animals?" And from this time she confessed herself to be a Christian, and was added to the number of the Martyrs.

But, when these tyrannical cruelties were confounded by CHRIST through the patience of the Blessed Martyrs, the Devil imagined other devices, such as confinement in prison, in the darkest and most loathsome dungeon; and stretching their feet in the stocks, even to the fifth hole; and all other such insults, as the under-keepers, when enraged, (and these same men filled with the Evil Spirit,) are accustomed to put upon their prisoners; so that many were suffocated in the prison, those whom the LORD willed thus to escape, showing forth His glory. Some there were who had been bitterly tormented, so that it should have seemed that with all possible care they could scarce have lived, who stayed in prison; deprived indeed of human care, but revived and strengthened by the LORD in body and soul, and exciting and comforting the rest. But the young, and those newly apprehended, whose bodies had suffered no previous mangling, could not endure the pressure of this confinement, but died in prison.

But the blessed Pothinus, who was entrusted with the bishoprick of the Church in Lyons, above ninety years of age, and quite worn out in body, scarce able to breathe from his previous infirmity, but renewed in strength by the readiness of his spirit, in his earnest desire of martyrdom, himself also was dragged to the tribunal; his body worn out with age and disease; but his life being still kept in

him, that CHRIST might triumph through it :—who, when brought by the soldiers to the tribunal, all the authorities of the city following him, and all the crowd, as though he had been CHRIST Himself, uttering all sorts of cries against him, bore a good testimony. And when asked by the Governor, who might be the God of the Christians ? he said, “ If thou be worthy, thou shalt know.” After this he was dragged about without mercy, and suffered all kinds of buffeting, those who were near him insulting him with their hands and feet, without regard to his age ; and those at a distance throwing at him whatever came to hand ; and all thinking any one guilty of a great fault and impiety, who should be wanting in insolence towards him. For they considered that they should thus avenge their gods. And he was cast, scarce alive, into the prison, and died after two days. Here then there took place a remarkable dispensation of God, and an infinite compassion of JESUS was shown forth ; a thing, which had rarely occurred in the brotherhood, but is not unsuited to the wisdom of CHRIST. For those, who denied at their first apprehension, were themselves also confined, and partook of our sufferings. At this time the denial of the faith was of no use to them ; for those, who confessed what they were, were imprisoned as Christians, no further charge being brought against them ; whereas these were still detained as murderers* and impure, suffering double the punishment of the rest. Those indeed the joy of martyrdom,† and the hope of the promises, and the love of CHRIST, and the SPIRIT of the FATHER, comforted ; but these, conscience tormented with great vengeance ; so that, in passing by, their countenances might be distinguished amongst all the rest. For the one went cheerfully, great glory and grace being mingled in their countenances ; so that their very chains hung on them as a noble ornament, as on a bride adorned with robes embroidered and fringed with gold ; at the same time smelling so of the sweet odour of CHRIST, that some even appeared to have been anointed with earthly perfumes. But the others went abashed, and dejected, and wretched in their looks, and full of disgrace ; and moreover reproached by the very heathen as ignoble and unmanly ; bearing indeed the charge of murder,‡ but having lost the honourable, and glorious, and life-giving Name. The rest, seeing these things, were confirmed ; and those who were apprehended confessed, without hesitation, not even taking any thought of the reasonings of the Devil.

* * *

To conclude ; their martyrdoms were distinguished by various kinds of death. For, having plaited a crown of different colours, and of all kinds of flowers, they offered it to the FATHER. It was needful, it seems, that these noble champions, who had endured a varied conflict, and been greatly victorious, should receive the great and incorruptible crown.

Maturus, and Sanctus, and Blandina, and Attalus, were taken

Vid. p. 4.

† Bearing witness.

‡ Namely, of eating human flesh, as above, p. 4.

to the beasts in the public place, for a common spectacle to the inhumanity of the heathen; this day of wild-beast fighting being given on purpose to show forth our Martyrs. And Maturus, and Sanctus, again went through, in the Amphitheatre, every torture, as if they had absolutely suffered nothing before. Rather, as having now in several combats foiled the Adversary, and engaged in the contest for the very crown, they supported again the course of scourging usually inflicted there, and the dragging about by the beasts, and whatever else the mad populace shouted and demanded, on this side and that, to have done to them; and above all, the iron seat, on which their bodies, being scorched, choked them with the smell. But their persecutors did not cease even with this; but were yet more outrageous, wishing to overcome their patience. And even thus they could hear nothing from Sanctus, beyond the words of confession he had been accustomed to use from the first. These then, their life holding out long through a severe conflict, were at last put to death; being by themselves, throughout that day, a spectacle to the world, instead of all the variety of single combats. But Bladina, hung up on a Cross, was placed to be devoured by the beasts that were turned in. She thus visibly hanging in the figure of a Cross, and engaged in earnest prayer, wrought great readiness in those who underwent the conflict; since they saw, in the midst of their sufferings, even with the outward eye, in their sister, Him who was crucified for them, to persuade those who believe in Him, that every one who hath suffered for the glory of CHRIST, hath forever communion with the Living God. And, none of the beasts having at that time touched her, she was taken down from the cross, and carried up again to the prison, to be kept for another conflict; that, by conquering in yet more encounters, she might bring inexorable condemnation on the crooked Serpent; and, though by nature little, weak, and easily to be despised, yet having put on CHRIST, the great and invincible Champion, she might encourage the brethren; having overpowered the Adversary in many combats, and having won in the contest the incorruptible crown.

Next, Attalus himself, being much called for by the multitude, (for he was a well-known man,) came in prepared for the combat by a good conscience, since he was truly exercised in the Christian discipline, and had always been amongst us a witness of the truth. He was led all round the Amphitheatre, with a tablet carried before him, on which was written in Latin, "This is Attalus the Christian." And the people being exceedingly enraged against him, the Governor, having understood that he was a Roman, ordered him to be taken back among the rest that were in prison; concerning whom he sent to Cæsar, and waited for his decision. But the mean time was not idle nor fruitless to them, but through their patience the infinite mercy of CHRIST appeared. For the dead members were enlivened through the living; and the Martyrs showed favour to those who were not martyrs, and there was

great joy to the Virgin Mother, the Church, in receiving those again living, whom she had cast away as dead and abortive. For by those good men, the greater number of those, who had denied CHRIST were renewed, and reconceived, and rekindled; and learned to confess; and now, living and full of nerve, were brought before the tribunal;—God, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but showeth goodness to repentance, granting them of His kindness to be again questioned by the Governor. For, (Cæsar having ordered that these should be executed, but that if any denied, they should be released,) when the public festival here began, which is numerously attended by persons, who come together to it from all nations, he brought the blessed Martyrs to the tribunal for a spectacle, and to make a show of them to the multitudes. Wherefore also he examined them again; and as many as appeared to have had Roman citizenship, he beheaded; but the rest he sent to the beasts. But CHRIST was greatly glorified in those who had denied before, but then confessed, contrary to the expectation of the heathen. For these were even separately examined, as on the idea that they were to be dismissed; but confessing, were added to the number of the Martyrs. But those remained without, who never had any trace of faith, nor a feeling of the bridal garment, nor a sense of the fear of God; but by their very manner of life brought scandal on the true way, that is, the sons of perdition. But all the others were united to the Church. And while they were under examination, one Alexander, a Phrygian by birth, and a physician by profession, who had lived many years in the provinces of Gaul, and was known almost by all, for his love to God, and boldness in declaring the word, (for he was not without a share of the Apostolic gift,) standing by the tribunal, and encouraging them by signs in their confession, was observed by those who stood round the tribunal, to be thus as it were in travail for them.* But the multitude, being enraged at hearing these confess again, who had before denied, cried out against Alexander, as if he had been the cause of it. And the Governor turning upon him, and asking who he was, he answered, “A Christian;” upon which the other, in a rage, condemned him to be given to the beasts. And next day he came in with Attalus. For the Governor, to please the people, gave up Attalus also again to the wild beasts. But they, in the Amphitheatre, having passed through all the instruments of torture, that ever were invented, and endured a most severe conflict, were at last put to death. Alexander without uttering a groan or a syllable, but conversing in his heart with God. But Attalus, when he was placed on the iron seat, and scorched, when the vapour went up from his body, said to the crowd, in the Roman tongue; “Behold this is man-eating, which yourselves do; but we neither eat men, nor do any other evil

* Gal. iv. 19.

thing." And when asked what name God hath, he answered, "God hath not a name, as a man hath."

And after all these things, on the last remaining day of the combats, Blandina was brought in again, with a boy from Pontus, of about fifteen years old; (who had been also brought in every day to see the tortures of the others;) and were commanded to swear by their idols. And because they remained constant, and set them at nought, the multitude was enraged against them; so that they neither pitied the youth of the boy, nor respected the female; but they put them to all the most dreadful tortures, and made them pass through the whole course of inflictions, demanding of them again and again to swear, (by the heathen gods,) but unable to make them do so. For the youth of Pontus, encouraged by our sister, so that even the heathen saw that she was forwarding and confirming him, having nobly endured all his torments, gave up the ghost. But the blessed Blandina, last of all, like a noble mother, having stirred up her children, and sent them forward victorious to the king; and having herself gone through all the same conflicts with her children, hastened after them, rejoicing and exulting in her departure, as if called to a marriage supper, instead of being thrown to wild beasts. And after the scourging, after the wild beasts, after the scorching, at last she was placed in a basket, and thrown to a bull; and died, after having been much tossed about by the animal, having no feeling of her sufferings, through her hope and hold of those things which she believed, and her converse with CHRIST; even the heathen themselves confessing that no woman ever among them bore such and so numerous tortures.

But not even thus could their madness, and cruelty to the Saints, be satisfied; but those fierce and barbarous tribes, stirred up by the Dragon, were hardly to be quieted. And they made another fierce attack on the bodies of the Martyrs, being not ashamed of their former defeat, because they had not the reasonable feeling of men; but it rather inflamed their anger, as though both Governor and people had been of some brute nature, showing like unjust hatred towards us; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "he that is ungodly, let him be ungodly still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still."* For they even threw those, who were stifled in the dungeon, to the dogs; watching them carefully night and day, lest any should be buried by us. And then having exposed what beasts and fire had left, partly torn, and partly burnt to a cinder, and the heads of the rest, with the headless bodies, they kept them in like manner unburied, with military observation and guard, many days. And some grinned and gnashed their teeth at them, seeking to wreak some further vengeance on them; others mocked and jested at them, glorifying their idols, and ascribing to them the punishment of the dead. Even the better sort, and those

* Rev. xxii. 11.

who seemed to have some compassion, uttered many reproaches, saying, "Where is their God, and what has His service profited them, which they chose before their own lives?" Such were the various doings of our enemies; but we were in great sorrow, for that we could not commit the bodies to the earth. For neither would night enable us to do it, nor would money persuade, nor entreaties shame them; but they guarded them in every way, as if they gained much in depriving them of burial.

* * * *

The bodies of the Martyrs, when they had been publicly insulted and exposed in every way for six days, were at last burnt to ashes by the ungodly, and swept into the river Rhone, which runs by, that not a fragment of them might appear still on the earth. And this they did, as if they could overcome God, and deprive them of their resurrection: in order, as they said, that "these Christians may not have even that hope, of rising again, which persuades them to bring in upon us some strange and new worship, and to despise all terrors, coming readily and with joy to their death. Now let us see, if they will rise again; and if their God can help them, and take them out of our hands."

—

Such were the sufferings of the Blessed Saints in early times for CHRIST the Saviour.

Hence we learn how CHRIST supports all who trust in Him; and how far we are below the Saints of early times in courage, patience, and love. We learn that our greatest troubles are very light, compared with those which Christians then underwent, and underwent for their very virtue's sake; whereas now we often suffer only for our sins. And we learn beside, how blessed it is to suffer boldly in a good cause, for we encourage others to do the same; and we are reminded what a short time the fiercest sufferings last; for these cruel trials of the Christians of France took place so long ago, that it is as if they had never been; whereas ever since, and now, and so on forever, these Martyrs, have been rejoicing in heaven in the presence of God.

Moreover, we learn how we ought to think of, love, and imitate good Christians, however far off. We are not so far from France, as France is from Asia. Now this letter was written to the Churches in Asia; which shows, how anxious the Christians in those parts were, to know about the trials of their brethren of France.

IRENÆUS.

IRENÆUS was Bishop of Lyons in France. He is supposed to have been a native of Asia ; he was born, at latest, about forty years after St. John's death, and died A. D. 202. The following is his account of the *faith* of Christians, and of the *Church* as the pillar and ground, the appointed witness of that faith :—

The Church, although extended through the whole world, even unto the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their Disciples the belief in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, the seas, and all that is in them ;—and in one CHRIST JESUS, the Son of GOD, who was made flesh for our salvation ; and in the HOLY GHOST, who by the Prophets proclaimed the merciful dispensation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection, and the assension into heaven, in our flesh, of the Beloved, CHRIST JESUS our Lord, and His appearing from heaven in the glory of the FATHER, to gather together all things in one, and to raise from the dead all flesh of human kind ; that to CHRIST JESUS our Lord and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the good pleasure of the Invisible Father, every knee may bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue may confess Him, and that He may recompense just judgment upon all, sending into everlasting fire wicked spirits and angels that transgressed and became apostates, and irreligious, unjust, lawless, and profane men, but upon the just and holy, who have kept His commandments, and persevere in His love, whether serving Him from the first, or turning by repentance, may bestow immortality by the free gift of life, and secure for them everlasting glory.

This is the message, and this the faith, which the Church has received (as was said above ;) and which, though dispersed throughout the whole world, she sedulously guards, as though she dwelt but in one place ; believes as uniformly as though she had but one soul and the same heart ; and preaches, teaches, hands down to posterity, as harmoniously as though she had but one mouth. True it is, the world's languages are various, but the power of the Tradition is one and the same. There is no difference of Faith or Tradition, whether in the Churches of Germany, or in Spain, or in Gaul, or in the East, or in Egypt, or in Africa, or in the more central parts of the world ; but as the sun, God's creature, is one and the same in all the world, so also the preaching of the Truth shineth every where, and ligheth every one who will come to the knowledge of the Truth. Among the rulers of the Church, neither he who is powerful in word speaks other doctrine, (for no one can be above his Master,) nor does the weak in the word diminish the Tradition. For, whereas the Faith is one and the same,

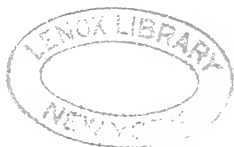
neither he who has much to say concerning it, hath any thing over, nor he who speaketh little any lack.

What a lesson does this passage furnish to the inquiring Christian of this day! Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, the friend of St. John. Here then is a witness, only one remove from the Apostles, for the Catholic Faith, such as we hold it, such as we declare it in Church unto this day. Wanderers and disputers, perplexed inquirers, and weak brethren! come home to this true doctrine of CHRIST, clearly conveyed to us from CHRIST Himself and His Apostles.

And observe this holy Bishop tells us, that it was received as such, preached as such, delivered as such, *all over the world*. There is no room for disputing, it is one and the same Truth, as CHRIST is One, and as the HOLY SPIRIT in the Church is One. Yes! and as the Church itself is one. The one faith is held in the one Church. Wanderers come home to it! come home to the Church Catholic, of which Irenæus spoke, which is still upon earth; of which the English Church, with its Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, is a true and living branch. And, at all events, even if you are not persuaded to this suitable religious deed, yet at least you cannot refuse to take up a humbler judgment of the Christianity of this day than is generally taken. For is not unity the chief blessing which CHRIST prayed His Church might possess? Was it not, as the above extract shows, marvellously instanced in the state of the Primitive Church? Is it not lost now? Surely this is undeniable. Whatever our knowledge, our exertions, our various gifts, Christians *have lost* their peculiar privilege, have transgressed their peculiar duty, "that they all should be one, as CHRIST and the FATHER are One."

Anecdote of the Great ST. BASIL, Archbishop of Casarea in Cappadocia.

The Holy Basil visited one day a sacred brotherhood; and, after such discourse as was fitting, said to the head of it, "Hast thou a brother here who has the grace of obedience?" and he answered him, "My Lord, we be all thy servants, and are endeavouring after salvation." Basil said a second time, "Yea, hast thou one so gifted?" And he brought unto him a brother. Then the holy Basil employed him to minister to him as he dined. After he had eaten, the other brought him water to wash; But Basil said, "Come hither, and I too will give thee water to wash." And the other suffered the Bishop to pour out the water upon his hands. Then said Basil, "When I enter into the chancel, come before me and I will make thee a Deacon. And afterwards he made him Priest, and took him with him to his own house on account of his *obedience*."



THE

SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY

[*An Extract from the Pastoral Letter of the
House of Bishops, 1856.*]

THE first duty of the Laity, which we shall notice is, that they "esteem" their Pastors and Bishops "highly in love, for their work's sake," according to the injunction of the Apostle. For what can the ministry do for a disobedient and gainsaying people? In all the multifarious business of the world, in its government, its legislation and its honors, we acknowledge the Laity to be the leaders, and we claim no part in their authority. But in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is not *of* the world though it be *in* the world, His officers are entitled to rule, and the people ought cheerfully to submit themselves according to the express precepts of Scripture. For "we," as saith St. Paul, "are ambassadors for Christ." And our Lord, Himself, addressing the Apostles, saith, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." The constituted Rulers of the Church, therefore, are the Ministry. With party politics, with sectional disputes, with earthly distinctions, with the wealth, the splendor and the ambition of the world, they have nothing to do. But they are bound to watch over the souls of the people, "as they that must give account." And it is the sacred duty, as well as the high privilege of the Laity, to give them all the aid and

sympathy which they need, for the just fulfillment of this most imperative obligation.

The next duty which we shall present to your attention concerns, the maintenance of the Clergy. The ministry who serve the altar have a right to live by the altar. The laborer is worthy of his hire. It is a grievous charge to bring against the Laity that they often suffer their Pastors and their Missionaries to wear out their very life, in a constant struggle with poverty, while those for whom they labor are wasting, in vain superfluity, ten-fold more than would be required for the reasonable support of the Gospel. This evil is already producing its sad results, in driving many of the Clergy into other pursuits, and in discouraging our youth from undertaking the work of the ministry. At this moment there are several hundred vacant Parishes in the United States, which have little prospect of being soon supplied. And if the people will not learn to understand the obligation which rests upon them, in sustaining the Pastors of the Church, the consequences must ultimately be such as we should tremble to contemplate.


The book of the prophet Malachi gives us a solemn warning on this subject, delivered to the chosen Israel. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, saith the Lord. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the store house, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Here we learn, by the word of God, the necessity which rests upon the people to set apart a just proportion of their property, for the support of public

* Mal. iii. 8.

worship, if they would avoid, on the one hand, a national curse, and secure, on the other, a national blessing. The Israelites were bound to give the tithe or tenth part of their yearly income, besides other offerings, for the maintenance of the priesthood. The people of Christ are free from this precise standard of requirement in the ceremonial law; but they are not free from the principle nor from the duty of contributing, according to every man's ability. For this support is equally indispensable now, and always will be, to the end of the world. The Clergy must be enabled to live with reasonable comfort, or they cannot labor. Should it prove, therefore, to be our unhappy lot that the Laity neglect or refuse to fulfill, with care and conscientiousness, this essential part of their obligations to the Redeemer, the result must become gradually worse and worse, until there is a total famine of the word of God, and along with it, the curse of the Almighty. Our Churches will then fall into ruin. Our Sabbaths will be desecrated. There will be no tongue to utter the tidings of salvation. There will be no hand to break the bread of life. There will be no religion left to guard the oath of office, and the administration of the law. There will be no morality to govern the conscience. Atheism, infidelity, and licentiousness will stalk in triumph throughout the land. Our national glory will go down in violence, in anarchy and blood. And our favored country, in following the sin, will likewise experience the awful fate of ancient Israel.

Your Bishops, beloved brethren, could not discharge their duty on the present occasion, without solemnly admonishing you that we are approaching this very point of danger. The inadequate amount of increase in the number of Candidates for the Ministry, and the long list of our vacant Churches and Missionary Stations, should warn us of our peril in time to avoid it. A most vigorous effort of our thoughtful Laity is greatly needed, under a just esti-



mate of their responsibility in this very serious matter. A powerful stimulus must be given, by conscientious and enlightened minds in every quarter, to the maintenance of the Clergy, to the support of our existing Theological Seminaries, Church Schools and Colleges, to the establishment of others, and to the encouragement of pious and qualified young men to undertake the ministerial work. And prayers should be offered with daily fervency to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest, and inspire the hearts of His people with resolution to sustain them. For the Ministry is an essential instrument of the whole divine system. How shall men believe unless they hear? How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? These questions are put by the inspired Apostle as if they admitted of but one reply. And that reply it is incumbent on our Laity to give by their liberality and zeal, under the full conviction that in no other way can the Church make any effectual progress in the conversion of mankind. Nay, more; in no other way can we avoid a gradual decline, through the baneful but increasing influence of worldliness and apathy.



REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

PERMIT a friend, who wishes well to all mankind, respectfully and affectionately to remind you of a divine law, too much forgotten by many, perhaps by you—REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

This is the command of the great GOD, the Maker of heaven and earth; "The GOD in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways;" the GOD who gave us being; the GOD who gives us all our time, and who allows us six days out of seven for worldly concerns. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy GOD." He claims this day as his own; and can you refuse so just a claim? He has hallowed this day, that is, he has made it holy; he has reserved it for his own service; he has ordained, that from the beginning of the world to the end of it, the children of men should employ its sacred hours in holy acts of private or public worship.

Say now, is it not right that you should cheerfully obey the heavenly command? Consider how necessary and reasonable the appointment! It is necessary, were it only to give suitable rest to the bodies of man and beast. Without this merciful institution how many would have allowed neither themselves nor their servants proper seasons for repose! If there were no sabbath in a nation, there would soon be no religion; and what then would become of the interests of morality? The merciful GOD appoints a sabbath for your good. It is for *your* sake, not his own, that he requires it. He needs not you, nor any child of man. He seeks *your* good, your everlasting good; for he has not only hallowed this day, but he has also blessed it. It is a day of special grace. The King of heaven sitting on the throne of mercy, gives audience on this best of days to the assembled subjects of his gracious empire. Millions of happy spirits now in heaven will bless GOD to all eternity for the spiritual blessings of CHRIST JESUS, which, when on earth, they received on this happy day; and thousands now on their way to glory, find it good for them to draw near to GOD, and justly esteem "a day in his courts better than a thousand." So that you are an enemy to yourself if you profane that day. If you love your own soul why will you lose the opportunity of being happy?

If you studied only your present good you would keep the sabbath. GOD honors them that honor him. Many have found that a Sunday well spent is usually followed by a prosperous week; for it is "the blessing of the LORD that maketh rich;" and how

car you expect his blessing if you disobey him? Lord Chief Justice Hale made the following observation:—"I have found," said he, "that a due observing of the duty of the Lord's day hath ever joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of that day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments."

And has not God frequently manifested his anger against sabbath-breakers? How many have perished in the midst of their amusements, and been suddenly called to the bar of God while engaged in actual rebellion against him! How many lovers of pleasure have been known, whose dying agonies have been awfully increased by the sad remembrance of the manner in which they spent their former sabbaths! And how many unhappy criminals have in their last moments ascribed their ruin to this sin! Beware, then, of a sin so dangerous in its tendency, so fatal in its consequences: for if you forsake God, he may justly forsake you; and then you are undone for ever.

Do you hope to go to heaven when you die? I know you do. But consider how the saints in glory are employed. They keep a perpetual sabbath, and the worship of God is their constant delight. But how can you reasonably hope for heaven unless you are formed by grace for the business and pleasures of it? And how could you enjoy an eternal sabbath, who now turn your back upon God's worship, or say of the sabbath, "What a weariness is it!"

I beseech you not only on account of God's command, but for your own sake, "Consider your ways." Let the time past suffice to have rebelled against your Maker. Rebel no longer. Now say, "Lord, it is enough. I have fought against thee too long. Forgive my iniquities past, and give me grace for time to come." No more let worldly business, nor vain amusements engross these holy hours. You must not rob God; the day is all his own. Let it be a whole day—a day as long as others. Say not, "What harm is there in taking a little amusement after Divine service?" Think a moment, and you will perceive the harm. Why should you erase the impressions of holy things as soon as they are made? Is not retirement as necessary as public worship? On other days much of your time is employed. Improve the leisure of the Lord's day. Retire and read your Bible. Converse with God in prayer. Converse with your own heart. Converse with good books; and above all, be concerned to experience the blessings of the Gospel which you hear. Have you been to church, and heard of Christ and salvation by him? Let it be your chief concern to be "found in him;" not trusting to your own works of righteousness, but to the righteousness he has brought in, and which is "to, and upon all that believe." Have you heard of the natural state of man as a sinner? Apply this to yourself, and be humbled in the dust of

humiliation. Have you been told from the word of God, that "except a man be born again, of water and the SPIRIT, he cannot see the kingdom of God?" Inquire whether you have ever known a change of heart, and pray for the HOLY SPIRIT, with all his gracious influences, that you may be made a new creature. Has some holy temper or moral duty been recommended to you from the pulpit? Endeavor to fix the necessity and beauty of it in your mind, that so you may bring it into practice. This is the way to keep a Christian sabbath; and thus proceeding in the fear of God, you may humbly hope for God's blessing in the present world and the world to come.

"Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it." Isa. lvi. 2.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth." Isa. viii. 13, 14.

Accept, candid reader, this friendly admonition, flowing from a sincere desire for your benefit. Give it a second reading; and may GOD, whose cause and glory, together with your best interests, are pleaded in this paper, be pleased to give it his blessing for CHRIST's sake! Amen.

Thine earthly sabbaths, LORD, we love:
But there's a nobler rest above:
To that our lab'ring souls aspire,
With ardent pangs of strong desire.

THE LORD'S DAY.

HAIL to the day, which He who made the heavens,
Earth, and their armies, sanctified and blest,
Perpetual memory of the Maker's rest !
Hail to the day, when He, by whom was given
New life to man, the tomb asunder riven,
Arose ! That day his Church hath still confest,
At once creation's and redemption's feast,
Sign of a world call'd forth, a world forgiven.
Welcome that day, the day of holy peace,
The LORD'S OWN DAY ! to man's Creator owed,
And man's Redeemer ; for the soul's increase
In sanctity, and sweet repose bestowed ;
Type of the rest, when sin and care shall cease,
The rest remaining for the loved of God !

GOD'S SABBATH.

CALL'D by the Church, before God's holy shrine,
Oft as the sabbath-morn with sacred ray
Warns me his courts to tread, I humbly pray
That for time past forgiveness may be mine,
Whene'er I've err'd, and he will still incline
My heart no more from his command to stray ;
But holy keep and unprofaned the day,
First bless'd and hallow'd by the voice divine.
Are there who deem a less commanding law
Alone gives sanction to the Christian's rest ?
Be theirs their fond conceit ! Be mine to draw
The mind to reverence, by God's Church confest,
His own commandment : and with holy awe
Revere the day by man's Creator blest !

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AN ADDRESS

ON

ESTABLISHING DAILY SERVICE

IN A VILLAGE CHURCH.

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OBSCURITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Serves to subdue the pride of man ; to convince us, that to understand them, we have need of a light superior to reason, and that we may apply to God for help.

May I ever understand the true language of Thy word, O Lord, and profit by it !

Vouchsafe, O God, to give me a love for Thy sacred Scriptures, and a true understanding of them, that I may see therein the wonders of Thy conduct, and Thy love to us, Thy miserable creatures.

Bishop Wilson's Sacra Privata.



Daily Worship of God in His Sanctuary.

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”—*Psalm cxxii. 1.*

IF we consider man merely as a *created being*, gifted by an Almighty Power with the breath of life, endowed with faculties which tend to his happiness and comfort, and especially with that highest of all natural faculties, the gift of reason which exalts him above the brute creation, and brings him nearer to the image of Divinity itself,—he is bound by every tie of gratitude to devote himself to the service of his Maker, to render his soul and body a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him; to present to Him the humble but heartfelt offering of praise and thanksgiving. Neither must this be one single act, but it should *unceasingly* occupy our thoughts, and *continually* influence our actions, inasmuch as this Almighty Being is not only our *Creator*, but our *Preserver* also. Our *daily* mercies are innumerable, and should call forth the *daily* declaration of thankfulness and gratitude to Him who watches with unwearied providence over our souls and bodies. The blessings of health and strength, friends and relations, food and raiment, and all the comforts we enjoy, are all from Him; but if these call for such praise and devotion, what shall we render unto Him for that greatest of all mercies, that most inestimable blessing—the gift of His dear Son, and the redemption of our souls from the endless misery, which by our sins we had so justly deserved, and must have suffered, but for His intense love to us? What, I say, shall we render unto Him for this unspeakable benefit? O, surely a single moment’s meditation, on the greatness of the work then wrought for us, will drive away our low and grovelling notions of the return we ought to make, the only return we *can* make, for such wondrous love, the complete devotion of ourselves to His service. First, then, let us consider this service as due from *individuals*.

Each soul and body, as conscious of the benefits *individually* received, is bound to testify *individually* his thankfulness for them; this leads us separately into our closets, to hold private communion with our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; to praise Him for all that we have, whether for our bodies or our souls; to acknowledge His guiding providence in all our ways, His care by day, and watchfulness by night; His goodness, which has followed us each hour of our lives, even while we forgot Him; to bless Him for having cast our lot in a Christian country, for the pure light of Gospel truth and Gospel privileges. Such and much more demands our homage as individuals: but as we are cast in various positions in this world, so in each have we a debt of gratitude to pay.

Next to a man's own soul, come the souls of those that are nearest and dearest to him, and this leads us to the worship of the *family*. Who that has at all experienced the comfort and happiness of the family circle, would neglect to meet together daily to bless the gracious Giver of all? Surely we are little deserving of such joys, if we meet not daily, however small be the number, to offer our humble tribute of praise for family blessings and family mercies.

And as the *family* is a *collection of individuals*, so is the *Church* a *collection of families*. No one will presume to say that a lively and visible service is not due for mercies received as *individuals*, nor, again, as *families*; but are there no blessings which demand our highest praise, received by us as *members of a Church*? When we look upon the Church, as it is declared to be in the Word of God, as Christ's body, of which that glorious Being has deigned to call Himself the head, which He has represented to us as His bride, His fair one, His beloved; when we consider the blessings which she, our gracious mother has provided for us; how she received us at our infancy into her fellowship by the holy sacrament of baptism, by which her Lord our Redeemer ordained that her appointed ministers should introduce us, as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; when we reflect upon her as alone containing the mysteries of God, of which her ministers are the stewards; that in her temples is administered the holy communion of the body and blood of her Lord, the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, in which He, we doubt not, is really present, though unseen by our

bodily eyes, and His body and blood verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful; when we think of the Holy Ghost called down into our hearts in the ordinances entrusted to her keeping and administration; when we reflect, I say, on all these blessings belonging to us, as members of the Holy Catholic Church, is there nothing to demand our highest praise and thankfulness? or, rather, is it possible to render too much or too devoted a service to Him who has permitted us to partake of such high and holy privileges? But we have been considering as yet only the sacrifice of *praise* as due to our God, as individuals, as members of families, and as members of the Church. This alone calls for a continued and unceasing worship in the closet, around the domestic altar, and in the house of God; but, frail creatures as we are, and standing in need of continual support, as depending hourly on the great Being who made us, for life, and breath, and all things; as desiring daily the pardon of our manifold sins and iniquities, and the declaration of God's forgiveness to those who truly repent; as needing unceasingly the aid and comfort of His Holy Spirit, we must come *daily* to the throne of grace in each of the three relations we have been considering, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Because we go into our closets, and there *individually* pray for these things, it does not do away with the duty and necessity of meeting daily with our *families* to implore the same blessings, since our relation to God as individuals does not alter or do away with our relation to Him as members of a family; neither, in like manner, does this latter relation prevent our responsibility as *members of His Church*: so that, in each of these three relations, it is our bounden duty to present the praise which the mercies we receive in each demand, and to offer the prayers which the blessings we need in each require.

I have thus endeavoured very shortly and very imperfectly, to show you, my dear brethren, the duty of the daily worship of our heavenly Father *in the closet, around the family altar, and in the house of God*, according to the three positions in the world in which it has pleased God to place all or most of us; and, that no one of these services should set aside the other, but where the relation is, there should be the corresponding act of worship. It has pleased God, of late years, to revive the spirit of religion in this land, so that the wilderness is beginning to flourish and "blossom as the rose." The family altars, that had

so long lain desolate, are gradually being raised up again ; and morning and evening the sacrifice of prayer and praise is offered up by the heads of many a Christian family, who have become, like the patriarchs of old, priests in their own households ; many a Joshua has arisen of late years, crying, " As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Nor can we sufficiently thank God for this happy rekindling of the embers which were fast dying away. But it is contrary to the nature of religion to be private and exclusive ; it is like a little leaven, which, if it can be but introduced into the lump, will leaven the whole : the spark was lit in the bosoms of individuals, but it extended quickly to their families. Nor does it rest here, for the blessed influence has been spreading slowly but steadily through the Church of our land. *Daily private prayer* led to *daily family prayer*, and *daily family prayer* is leading to *daily public prayer* in the sanctuary of God. Many an Elijah (may God, of His mercy, increase the number !) has been " repairing the altar of God that was broken down ;" the daily sacrifice is again being offered up ; the confession of sins is again being daily made by congregations of saints in every quarter of our land ; the voice of praise is again heard in " the place where God's honour dwelleth ;" and prayer is again being daily made in the " house of prayer" for a blessing on our land and all therein, and for the whole Catholic Church of Christ, that all its members may " hold the truth in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life." And may we not, attribute to this revival of the spirit of prayer the increase of true religion in our Church, knowing that God has especially promised to give a gracious answer to whatsoever any number of us agree together in asking in His Son's name ? And if this be so, what an abundant blessing might we not expect, if in every church in our land—ay, and how much more if in every church throughout the world—*daily prayer* were made for the welfare of Christ's body, that it might " dwell in unity and godly love !" Is it not the duty of every one who is a member of that body to be very earnest in fanning the flame that, by God's mercy, is being again rekindled ? Is it not a fearful thing, either by thought, word, or deed, to be in any way contributing to quench that flame ? Is there not a danger, in so doing, of being found " fighting against God ?" May God give us all grace seriously to ponder on these things, and may He guide our judg-

ments aright, that all things may tend to His honour and glory, and the good of ourselves, our country, and the whole Church of Christ!

I have put these considerations to you, as responsible beings, as sensible of the debt of gratitude owing to God as the moral Governor of the universe, as the Creator of your souls and bodies, as your Preserver and continual Benefactor, and, above all, as your Redeemer and Sanctifier. I have merely stated the duty you owe, as gathered from the different positions in which His providence has placed you. Two great authorities, however, there are, which I shall briefly mention, to show you that it is your duty, nay, rather, that you are bound, to worship God daily in His sanctuary. The one authority taken from the Old Testament, which the introduction of the Christian dispensation by no means set aside,—the other, from the commands of the Church to which we belong. The Church of the Israelites was immediately governed by God, by whose directions public worship was performed daily, and a lamb sacrificed morning and evening. Now, it is the same God we have to worship: three or four thousand years cannot change the mind of God, in whose sight “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” He who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” cannot approve, nay, command, daily worship in His Church in one age, and disapprove it in another. Nor do we find that the coming upon earth of the Son of God had annulled the command; for we find our blessed Saviour continually attending at the ordinary service in the temple, and Jewish synagogues. We find the Apostles, after the ascension of their Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, continued “*daily with one accord in the temple.*” We know that the early Church kept up the custom,—they had no authority or desire to change it; and that in branches of that Church it has been continued uninterrupted to the present day. Has, then, our own Church expressly forbidden or even been silent on the subject of a daily worship of God in His sanctuary, that we see, through the length and breadth of our land, generally speaking, God’s houses closed on every day but Sunday?—that we hear not the sound of praise issuing daily from grateful hearts within their walls?—that the earnest prayer from unfeigned lips ascends not daily from their altars? No; thanks be to God, our Church is true to her duty, and has provided that

all her children should be true also. She has expressly provided a form of *daily* morning and evening prayer. She has divided the Psalms of David, so that a portion being read daily, we may go through the whole every month. She has appointed the Word of God to be read daily, so that the most part of the Old Testament may be read through every year once, and the New Testament thrice. Thus has she provided for us a portion of meat, a measure of daily bread which we do wisely to receive, and have no right to reject. As long as the laws of the Church remain unchanged (and God forbid that the licentious hand of modern infidelity and lawlessness should ever be allowed to touch her hallowed institutions, and do away with what tends so much to His glory, and the good of His people!) however plausible may be the objections which the profane voice of worldliness would bring forward against this pious duty, the way of the ministers of the Church is most clear and plain; the laws which they have sworn to obey are as binding now as they were in the first year in which they were made. Would that they were universally carried into practice!

And now let me notice an objection which is commonly urged against fulfilling what all, if they judge conscientiously, must allow is a manifest duty; namely, that "so few will attend in God's house at His daily worship." I do, indeed, hope, that such will not be the case, but that many will gladly seize the opportunity presented to them of joining in the solemn service of the sanctuary; yet should it be my sad lot to have to testify against you, that "I piped unto you, but ye have not danced; I mourned unto you, but ye have not lamented:" should it happen that many will reject this duty and this privilege,—what then? Does it become for that reason less a duty and a privilege? Is, therefore, God not to be honoured in His sanctuary? is He not still to be entreated for His Church? O, surely it is the weakness of the wisdom of this world that would value a privilege by the numbers that embrace it: then might the very religion of Jesus be despised; because at the first it was rejected, and the holy Author of it persecuted and slain. No; we plead the promise of our divine Redeemer, who declared that He was present with the smallest company that met together in His name, and would answer their prayers; and forbade His ministers to faint in their labours of love, for that He is with them always, even unto the end of the world. On these promises

we fully trust, knowing that He is faithful who hath promised ; relying on this we look for an enlarged blessing to be poured out on our parish, on our country, and the Church of Christ at large. We do not selfishly confine our thoughts and prayers to ourselves and those immediately connected with us, but seek to increase the welfare and prosperity of the whole body by earnest and constant supplication to its Head and Lord.

But surely something must be urged by those who would wilfully absent themselves from the company of God's worshippers, who would reject this means of grace. "I have not the time for it," say some ; "It is not convenient," say many. It is a painful thing to hear of *convenience* as connected with religion ; it was a word unknown in the early Church. Go, witness the prophets of old suffering under the most cruel persecutions and tortures ; go and study the lives of the apostles and martyrs "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," preaching the gospel to their dying fellow-sinners in the most trying dangers ; the word "convenience" was not thought of, in their love to their perishing brethren. Or, if this be not enough, go, visit Calvary and Gethsemane : see the Son of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, leaving the glory and happiness of heaven, struggling in awful agony under the burden of the sins of the whole earth ; mocked and spit on by those whom He came to save, and ending a life of shame and suffering by a cruel death upon the cross. Is there the idea of "*convenience*" breathed in all this ? and dare we so mock the Majesty of heaven as to presume to bring forward the low and paltry excuse that it is not "convenient" to us to render to the King of kings and Lord of lords His due ? O beware, I pray you, of provoking God's most righteous indignation by such gross mockery and daring insult ! And no less painful is it to hear of "want of time" brought as a reason for not being able to attend at the daily sacrifice. "What hast thou which thou hast not received ?" and is it too much to ask you to give back a small portion of what has been so freely given to you. Your life, your health, your time, all that you have, is granted to you from above. What ! cannot you render back but a part of one short hour in acknowledgment that you receive all from God ? would that time be lost to you in which you were praising Him for past mercies, and imploring fresh ones from Him ? in which you were

confessing your sins to Him, and receiving the declaration of His pardon of them? in which you were hearing the holy truths of His precious word, and obtaining fresh aids of His Holy Spirit? O, do not say you have not time when such blessings present themselves before you. I do most firmly believe that even in temporal things you would suffer no loss from this devotion of half an hour at the beginning of the day; and in the things that belong to your everlasting peace, I need not say how rich your reward would be. It is no empty imagination, it is a sound reality; for it is founded on the word of God, that cannot lie. O that all, instead of endeavouring to find excuses for staying away from this service, may gladly welcome the opportunity of publicly worshipping their God daily; crying out in the spirit of the holy David, "I was *glad* when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Think what blessings have been found by those who have daily waited on God in His temple. Remember the ancient Simeon and venerable Anna, who "departed not from the temple, but served God day and night;" and thus found what millions of less zealous Jews never saw—the "consolation of Israel." You may not be rich, you may not be of the mighty ones of the earth; but you may gain, by thus attending God's service, riches that never shall perish, power that the enemy shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. You may find, nay, if you come with the pious zeal and faith of Simeon and Anna, you *will* find, the consolation of Israel,—peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

But further, we are permitted to carry our eyes beyond the present, and to gaze into distant ages, when the Church militant upon earth shall have exchanged her poor imperfect worship for the song of Moses and of the Lamb, around the throne of God in heaven. And what will be the nature of her worship there? Will it be a solitary service, or the devotions of disunited bodies? No; we are assured by the word of prophecy that countless multitudes will be joining their voices; all singing the same praise, crying with one loud harmonious voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And shall this celebration of the praise of God be only occasionally; once in every seven days? No; they rest not *day and night*, saying, "Holy, holy holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

This is the nature of the service of heaven, my dear brethren ; and this, we conclude, is the highest order of worship that can be paid to the Almighty Majesty of Him who reigns there. And have we nothing to do with such a service ? O yes ! the Church triumphant in heaven and the Church militant here on earth are one body ; all are God's saints, all are redeemed by the same Saviour ; it is but the narrow stream of Jordan, the short passage of death, that divides us ; "part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now ; all are members of the body of Christ ; all are one with Him. How should we strive, then, to make our services resemble theirs ! We believe in the "communion of saints ;" how can we better hold communion with the spirits of the just made perfect, with the souls of those dear ones whom we loved while they were on earth, than by joining with them in one vast body in singing hallelujahs before the throne of God and of the Lamb ? If the union of the devotions of the inhabitants of heaven forms a meet service for the Lord of Glory, where all is perfect and all is holy, may we not suppose that the same Lord will regard with favour and bless the united worship of the inhabitants of the earth ; and the larger the number that join their voices in this service, the greater the unity that prevails amongst them,—the more worthy will be the offering to the throne of grace. God is essentially *one* ; three persons, yet *one* God. One of the last prayers of our Redeemer while on earth was, that all His disciples should be joined in the strictest union. How can this unity be better maintained than by all meeting daily, and uniting their voices in His temple in prayer and praise to their one Lord and Master ?

And here we may mention the beauty of the services of our Church, which tend so much to this unity. The same prayers are offered up in every church ; at this moment millions are praying in the same words in which we have ourselves been just now praying ; there is not an hour in this day, in which, in some portion of the globe, these prayers are not being presented. What an idea of unity this gives us ; that however far we may be separated from friends and relatives, we may all meet in spirit, and offer up together the same prayers for a blessing on ourselves, one another, and the whole Church ! And if this is a delightful thought for every Sunday, how much more for every day ! The Bible no where gives us to understand that the edge of our prayers is blunted by their being often repeated ; on the

contrary, we are told "pray without ceasing," "ask," "seek," "knock," and this continually. We lose much of the power of our Church services by using them so seldom; the more we make use of them, the better shall we know their power, their suitableness, the sound Christian principles they are calculated to inculcate; and it adds no little to our love for our Church and her services, to remember that numbers of God's saints who are now joining in heavenly songs have prepared themselves for glory with these self-same forms of prayer and praise that we are now using. O may we follow their steps "who through faith and patience now inherit the promises," not forgetting "the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is;" but may many of you, be led, by God's grace moving you thereto, to assemble daily in the temple of God, to confess your sins, and seek forgiveness of them; to praise God for His mercies to you as created, preserved, redeemed, and sanctified; and to receive the daily bread of God's word, which our beloved Church has appointed for you: and if difficulties seem to arise to prevent your coming, go, sit at Jesus' feet and hear Him say, "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross daily;" beware of preferring your temporal concerns to the care of your immortal souls; for "what shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?" May you rather rejoice, as true members of Christ's body, in the opportunity now given you of daily, in common with other members of the same body, worshipping the Lord God of your fathers; and each banishing all thoughts of worldly consideration, selfishness, convenience, say from the heart, "I was *glad* when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

SCRIPTURE
COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE.

PRESENTED

TO THE CONSIDERATION OF
THE CHILDREN OF THE PROPHETS,
AND OF THE COVENANT THAT GOD MADE WITH
THE FATHERS,
SAYING UNTO ABRAHAM,
"AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES
OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED."

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SCRIPTURE

COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE,

&c., &c.

1. Jehovah is the one true God, Creator of all things.

OLD TESTAMENT. •

HEAR, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. *Deut.* vi. 4.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. *Gen.* i. 1.

By the word of the Lord were all things made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. *Psalms* xxxiii. 6.

And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostril the breath of life, and man became a living soul. *Gen.* ii. 7.

2. Messiah promised immediately after the fall of man.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. *Gen.* iii. 15.

NEW TESTAMENT.

I and my Father are one. *John* x. 30.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. *John* i. 1, 3.

And so it is written. Man became a living soul. *1 Cor.* xv. 45.

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman. *Gal.* iv. 4.

For this purpose was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. *1 John* iii. 8.

IT WAS PREDICTED—

3. That the Messiah was to descend from Abraham and from the stem of Jesse.

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. *Gen. xxii. 18.*

And there shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. *Isa. xi. 1.*

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. *Matt. i. 1.*

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem. *Mark xi. 9—11.*

4. That he was the Star of Jacob.

There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. *Numb. xxiv. 17.*

I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. *Rev. xxii. 16.*

5. He appeared to Moses in the wilderness.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush, and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed: and moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. *Exod. iii. 2, 6, 14.*

This is He that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us. *Acts vii. 38.*

Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. *John viii. 57, 58.*

6 He was revealed to David.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. *Ps.*

Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David, for David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. David himself calleth him Lord, how is he then his Son? *Mark* xii. 35—37.

IT WAS FORETOLD—

7. That a messenger should prepare his way.

Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare my way before me. *Mal.* iii. 1.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. *Mal.* iv. 5.

The voice of one that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make strait in the desert a highway for our God. *Isa.* xl. 3.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way. *Luke* i. 76.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias. *Luke* i. 17.

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. *Matt.* iii. 1, 2.

8. That his birth should be miraculous.

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel. *Isa.* vii. 14.

For unto us a child, is

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. But while he (Joseph)

OLD TESTAMENT.

born, unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Isa.* ix. 6.

NEW TESTAMENT.

thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying. Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins. *Matt.* i. 18—22, 25.

9. That Bethlehem should be the place of his birth.

And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. *Micah* v. 2.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, and when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born, and they said, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall he come forth that shall rule my people Israel. *Matthew* ii. 1—6.

That the offices of Messiah should be those of

10. *A Prophet.*

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. *Deut. xviii. 15.*

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities. *Acts iii. 22, 26.*

11. *A Priest.*

The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. *Ps. cx. 4.*

But He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. *Heb. v. 6.*

12. *A King.*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee. *Zech. ix. 9.*

Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. *John i. 49.*

13. *A Shepherd.*

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. *Isa. xl. 11.*

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord. *Zech. xiii. 7.*

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep. *John x. 14.*

The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. *John x. 11.*

OLD TESTAMENT.

NEW TESTAMENT.

14. *A Saviour.*

For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour. *Isa. xliii. 3.*

For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *Luke ii. 11.*

15. *A Mediator of a new Covenant.*

And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the Covenant. *Mal. iii. 1.*

Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. *Jer. xxxi. 31, 33.*

For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. *Heb. ix. 15.*

For if the first Covenant had been faultless, there should have been no place sought for the second. *Heb. viii. 7.*

16. *The Redeemer of body and soul.*

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. *Job xix. 25, 26.*

I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. *Ps. xvii. 15.*

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. *John. xi. 25, 26.*

But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 *John. iii. 2.*

OLD TESTAMENT.

17. That he should perform miraculous cures.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.*

18. That he should come to Jerusalem on the foal of an ass.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy King cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. *Zech. ix. 9.*

NEW TESTAMENT.

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and he healed them. Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel. *Matt. xv. 30, 31.*

come to Jerusalem on

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go unto the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, loose them and bring them unto me: and the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. *Matt. xxi. 1, 2, 6, 7.*

19. That he should be received with acclamations by the multitude.

Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord. O Lord, send us now prosperity. Blessed is

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to

OLD TESTAMENT.

he that cometh in the name of the Lord. *Ps. cxviii. 25, 26.*

NEW TESTAMENT.

the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannain the highest. *Matt. xxi. 9.*

20. That he should come to his Temple.

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts. *Hag. ii. 9.*

And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. *Mal. iii. 1.*

And behold there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. *Luke ii. 25, 27—30.*

21. That he should be a light to all nations and the glory of Israel.

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth. *Isa. xlix. 6.*

And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory. *Isa. xlv. 13.*

Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. *Luke ii. 30—32.*

22. That he should be a stone of stumbling.

And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. *Isa. viii. 14.*

But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block. *1 Cor. i. 23.*

OLD TESTAMENT.

The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. *Psalm cxviii.* 22, 23.

And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. *Isa.* viii. 15.

23. That he should come before the departure of the sceptre from Judah.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. *Gen.* xlix. 10.

24. That he should be silent before his accusers.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth. *Isa.* liii. 7.

25. That he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver.

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

NEW TESTAMENT.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. *Acts* iv. 11.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken. *Matt.* xxi. 44.

Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. *John* xix. 15.

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? and he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. *Matt.* xxvii. 12-14.

And (Judas Iscariot) said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. *Matt.* xxvi. 15.

OLD TESTAMENT.

And he said unto me, Cast it unto the potter. A goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord. *Zech.* xi. 12, 13.

NEW TESTAMENT.

Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood; and he cast down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. *Matt.* xxvii. 3—7.

26. That he should be scourged and spit upon.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. *Isa.* l. 6.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. *John* xix. 1.

Then did they spit in his face and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands. *Matt.* xxvi. 67.

27. That he should be put to death, be numbered with transgressors, and make intercession for his enemies.

And after three-score and two week shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself. *Dan.* ix. 26.

And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. *Luke* xxiii. 32.

OLD TESTAMENT.

And he was numbered with the transgressors ; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. *Isa. liii. 12.*

28. That his hands and his feet should be pierced.

The assembly of the wicked enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet. *Ps. xxii. 16.*

29. That they should divide his garments among them.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. *Ps. xxii. 18.*

30. That they should revile him.

All they that see me, laugh me to scorn ; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him seeing he delighteth in him. *Ps. xxii. 7, 8.*

31. That he should pray in agony.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? *Ps. xxii. 1.*

NEW TESTAMENT.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. *Luke xxiii. 34.*

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. *Luke xxiii. 33.*

And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. *Luke xxiii. 34.*

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him with the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God. *Matt. xxvii. 39, 41, 43.*

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? *Matt. xxvii. 46.*

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NEW TESTAMENT.

32. That they should offer him gall and vinegar.

They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. *Ps. lxi. 21.*

They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. *Matt. xxvii. 34.*

33. That his bones should not be broken.

Neither shall ye break a bone thereof. *Exod. xii. 46.*

He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. *Ps. xxxiv. 20.*

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him, but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. These things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. *John xix. 32, 33, 36.*

34. That those who should pierce him should look upon him.

And they shall look on me, whom they have pierced. *Zech. xii. 10.*

And one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; and again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. *John xix. 34, 37.*

35. That his body should not see corruption.

Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. *Ps. xvi. 10.*

Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet. and knowing that

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NEW TESTAMENT.

God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. *Acts ii. 29—32.*

36. That he should ascend into heaven.

Thou hast ascended on high. *Ps. lxxviii. 18.*

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. *Luke xxiv. 51.*

37. That he should receive gifts for men.

Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. *Ps. lxxviii. 18.*

Yet hear, now, O Jacob, my servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen, I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring. *Isa. xlv. 1, 3.*

And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. *Joel ii. 28.*

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. *Acts. ii. 1—4.*

38. That his dominion should extend over all the earth.

OLD TESTAMENT.

From the rising of the sun, until the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. *Mal. i. 11.*

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. *Ps. xxii. 27.*

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. *Ps. lxxii. 11.*

39. That he will come again in glory to judge the world.

For he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. *Ps. xcvi. 9.*

I saw in the night visions, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and they came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. *Dan. vii. 13, 14.*

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And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. *Matt. viii. 11.*

And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations. *Matt. xxiv. 14.*

For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. *Rev. xvii. 14.*

He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. *Acts xvii. 31.*

The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. *John v. 22, 27.*

And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. *Rev. xi. 15.*

REV J. KETTLEWELL'S

Directions

FOR A

HOLY AND HAPPY DEATH.

ABRIDGED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

PROPOSITIONS FOR THE SICK,

AND

Prayers,

FROM BISHOP ANDREWES AND OTHERS.

‘Let the sighing of the Sick ascend before Thee, O Lord’

NEW YORK:

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DIRECTIONS

FOR

A Holy and Happy Death.

1. *The sick man's thoughts on leaving this world.*

WHEN God arrests us with sickness, it is time to think of leaving this world. Not that every man who falls sick must presently give himself up for dead ; but because sickness puts life in hazard, and brings a man to resign himself into the hands of God. In this preparation to leave the world, the sick person's first care is, to separate himself from worldly cares, and incumbrances of business. Let him look upon himself as one called off from the conduct of these matters, to the *giving a strict account of them*. The work and worldly cares of life are to be left to those who think of living ; but how to die is the business that lies before him. To cast off these worldly cares, it is fit he first settle them. And that is by setting his house in order, and making his will. When all are thus settled and laid aside, having taken his leave of the world, he may give himself up to the will and good pleasure of Almighty God, to dispose of him either in life or death, and make his sickness end either in health or heaven. If the physicians are called in to take care of his body, it is fit he receive their advice with meekness and thankfulness, and willingly follow and submit himself to their wholesome and reasonable directions. And when he sends for one, he must put his body into his hands, under God, and willingly take such medicines, and *submit to such rules and restraints*, as he judges needful for his safety, or the recovery of his health ; and not order and tell his physician what he shall prescribe to him, nor weary him out with importunities to let him have what he himself fancies. And let him still remember to make fervent prayers one ingredient in all his medicines, considering that, since it is God who works cures, *prayers are as necessary thereto as any thing else*. He must not, like Asa, set God aside when



he seeks to the physicians (2 Chron. xvii. 12), but expect all the cure from God's blessing, and when it comes, give Him the chief honour and praise for the same.

2. Securing his peace with God by repentance, faith, and continuance in the unity of the Church.

But whilst this care is taken for the body, the chief thing which he has to employ himself on his sick-bed, after the settlement of his worldly estate, is to take care of his soul. And for this, he must call in the assistance of the guides of souls, sending for the elders of the Church, that they may pray over him (James v. 14.), and assist and comfort him, and administer to him the word, and the Holy Communion, resolving and assisting him in all things that may be needful for the finishing of his repentance, the support of his spirit, or the peace of his conscience.

1. To finish his repentance. And in order thereto, let him carefully review all his past life—and work himself up into true contrition for the same, affectionately bewailing his extreme folly and unworthiness therein. And let him fix holy, deliberate, and unreserved purposes against all his former offences; and make all due and reasonable satisfaction for all wrongs done by him to any persons, by any ways.

And take care of the payment of all his just debts; and seek reconciliation where he has given any just offence; and forgive those who have injured or disobliged him. And break off his iniquity by righteousness (Dan. iv. 27), and be more abundant in alms-deeds; and consummate and finish any good designs which he had piously laid in his health. And let him earnestly beg God's pardon, and comfortably hope for the same, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

2. To show forth his faith, which he may do by often repeating his Creed. And let him often say, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief. Amen."

"All this, O Lord, I steadfastly believe. Oh, keep me from having my portion among unbelievers. Amen."

"Lord, keep me from wavering or any ways doubting of the same in my weakness. Amen."

"Lord, give me the comforts of this belief at my death, and make me find the blessing of it after death. Amen."

3. To profess his continuance in the unity of the Church;

and that as he has lived, so now, by God's grace, he is preparing himself to die in the communion thereof. And let him often say, "Lord, as I have endeavoured to live, so now I profess to die, in the *communion of saints*, and in the one body whereof thou art the Blessed Head, *keeping* therein, to the last, *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. Amen." (Eph. iv. 3, 4.)

"For I profess Thy true faith, O my God ; and present unto Thee holy prayers and a pure worship, in the Unity and Communion of Thy Holy Church. Particularly, O Lord, I profess this faith, and present this worship, in due adherence, and subjection, and obedience to those Orthodox Pastors whom Thou hast set over me in this Church, where I live. And I profess and present the same in hearty concurrence and communion with all other faithful Christians, and communicating members of this Body, in all other times and places ; and with brotherly affection, and intercession with Thee for them wheresoever placed or dispersed. And as for those who are broken off from this true faith and worship, or from the Unity and peace of Thy Church, O Lord, I look upon them with the bowels of a brother, not with the insults and triumphs of an enemy. I pity all heretics, and pray that they may return to be sound in the faith. I pity all schismatics, and pray that they may return to the Unity and Communion of Thy Church. And, O Blessed Lord, do Thou give unto them humble and teachable minds, that so they may either all see the way of Thy truth, or at least may be pitiable and excusable before Thee. Amen."

"And as for all the divisions which have rent Thy Church, O Blessed Jesu, I do most heartily lament and bewail them. My heart, O Prince of Peace, is with them who love to seek those truths which make for peace, and who long and labour to heal Thy Church's breaches. I utterly disclaim all bitter zeal and unchristian violence against persons of different parties from me. I am ready both willingly to see and joyfully to own all that is good, and all that is Thine, O my Lord, in any of their persons or actings, and am careful not to make any of them worse than they really are, by my evil surmises. And I am, and through thy grace, O merciful Saviour, ever will be, ready to show them all offices of justice, and humanity, and of common charity. Amen."

And after these things are done to procure God's peace, for

the comforting and quieting his conscience with the lively hopes thereof, he may receive the Holy Communion, if he can have it; looking on it both as God's own sure seal of remission of his sins, and also as his own viaticum, or provision by the way, to strengthen and support his spirit, and keep him from faintness or failures through all the remainder of his difficult and wearisome passage to the regions of rest and peace.

After the sick person has taken this first and chief care for his soul, to make its peace for past or present offences, his next care must be to bear the pains and weakness of his sick-bed, with *trust in God*, with *resignation to His will*, with *thankfulness*, and with *patience* to the end.

3. On trusting God.

First, he must set himself to bear them with *trust in God*. The accidents and uneasiness of his sickness will still alarm his fears and try his faith; and it must be his care to show no anxious or distracted thoughts under them. But let him remember, that *they are all in God's hands*, and shall have such end only as He pleases; that He who sends them will take care they go *no further than is fit* they should, and will turn them to the best at last; that he is safer and better in God's keeping and ordering than he could be in his own; and may therefore lay aside all painful and mistrustful cares. And when he feels much sorrow and many difficulties, and may fear and foresee worse, let him often say, "Lord, I meekly receive all my sorrows and dangers, *because Thou sendest them*; and they shall not terrify me, because Thou governest them. And I am sure Thou considerest all that lies upon me, and wilt turn it unto good; that Thou considerest how much I can bear, and wilt in tender mercy take off the rest; that Thou considerest what strength I have to bear, and wilt graciously supply me with what is wanting. Thou considerest how long I can bear, and wilt give me ease *at the fittest season*. And since Thou wilt ease me in Thy due time, and support me till Thou eatest me, I will not grow weary or faint in my mind, but wait with patience till my ease comes. Amen. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, and Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me (Ps. xxiii. 4). Yea, though Thou killest me, yet will I trust in Thee (Job xiii. 15), and have hope.

even in my death, to find everlasting rest and joy after death Amen."

2. If it troubles him to leave his friends and family, perhaps meanly provided for, let him consider that God sees this as well as he, and yet He thinks fit to call him away from them. And therefore let him reckon to set them all safe by recommending them to Him, as our departing Lord provided for his disconsolate and destitute disciples by recommending them to His heavenly Father, and praying to him for them. And let him remember also, that this is truly *to leave all* to come to God, if we can find in our heart to go forth readily when all these call upon us to stay.

And let him often say, "I trust Thee, O God, as with myself, so with my nearest relations, my wife and family, and with my friends, and with all who depend on me. I trust them with Thee, in full assurance that there is no way to make them *happy and safe* like putting them into Thy hands. I trust them to Thee, because Thou art the *Husband of the widow* and the Father of the fatherless, and hast promised to take care of them. I leave them not destitute, *for Thou art with them*; and Thy care, O my God! is the best guardian, and Thy blessing is the richest portion. And Thou wilt have infinitely a more watchful care of them, and canst do infinitely more for them, than I can. Lord, take care of them; for *I commit them to Thy care*. Oh, let them always have the special care and Providence which Thou takest of the widows and orphans. Let them have the blessings which, by Thine abundant mercy, follow the children of those that truly fear Thee. Lord, be with them, as Thou hast been with me, to their lives' end. And keep them always most thankful and obedient unto Thee; and let them all have the blessing of Thy tender care at present, and of thy peace at the last. Amen." (Psa. xxvi. 10; Jer. xlix. 11; Hos. xiv. 3.)

4. *On resignation to the will of God.*

Let the sick man, therefore, amidst all his pains and perils, *freely give up himself into God's hands*, and be glad and thankful that he can lodge himself there. And let him often say, "Lord! I know I am in Thy hands, and that I cannot be in better, nor do I desire to be in any other. Not my will, O God, but Thine be done Amen. And do Thou allot for me life or death,

health or sickness, removal or continuance of my sorrows, as Thou seest would really be fittest for me, and for Thy glory, and not as my mistaken fancy may think to be so. Amen. Thy will be done, O my God! for it is always a most blessed and beneficial will to those that fear Thee. It sends mercies at the fittest time, and sends troubles when they have most need of them, and takes them off again when it is fittest to remove them. Our wills, O Father, are too often guided by folly; but Thine is *always* and *altogether wise*, and has ever been most gracious and full of mercy towards me. Thou knowest best, O Lord, when it is fit for me to come into this world; and when it is fit for me to leave it. Oh, do Thou appoint me how or in what condition I shall live, and how long! but withal, help me to do Thy work whilst I live. *Choose Thou* my condition, and let my lot be *what may please Thee*; but then give me grace faithfully and wisely to discharge the duties of that condition, and let my carriage under it be such as may please Thee too. Amen.¹ (1 Sam. iii. 18; Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.)

5. *On bearing his sorrows with thankfulness.*

A *thankful spirit will find enough* to give God thanks for on a sick-bed, or in any affliction; and an unthankful spirit *will never want matter enough to complain of*, in a better condition. And if any afflicted or sick persons are unthankful, *it is not because they want mercies* which deserve their thanks, but *because they overlook them*. This virtue of thankfulness to God speaks true humility, when we show, as we do thereby, that the least mercies deserve our thanks, and that the worst states which God puts us into are too good for us. And it expresses entire goodwill and love to God, when we can love and praise Him even whilst He corrects and smites us, and take notice of all His kindnesses, in the midst of our afflictions, and place an implicit belief and confidence in His love, that by all these sorrows He is doing us good, and deserves our thanks. To preserve in himself this excellent virtue of thankfulness to God, let the sick person set himself diligently to seek out what may deserve his thanks; *and not, as is too often done, what may minister to complaints*. Let him pick out of *every thing*, and out of every accident that befalls him, what he may praise God for; and let those be the things which he reflects on within himself, and dis-

courses of to others. And under any pain or weakness, let him often say, "Lord ! under all my sorrows, I have much to give Thee thanks for. I suffer infinitely less than I deserve : blessed be Thy mercy for sparing me. Amen."

"My sufferings, O Lord, are not only justly deserved, but they are needful also to do me good ; blessed be Thy Name for seeking and compassing my benefit thereby. Amen."

"And when my ailments come, they want many aggravations which would make them a great deal worse to be borne ; and are attended with many seasonable helps and comforts, to ease and strengthen my spirit under them. Sometimes, O Lord ! by Thy grace, I have ease : sometimes I take sweet sleep, and rest from my pains and labours, and awake with great refreshment. And under all my pains and weakness, by Thy mercy, I have some to help me, and more to pity and pray for me. I find support from within or from without. Blessed be Thy Name for these helps and comforts under my distress. Amen."

"Thou often mitigatest my pains ; or if one symptom rages, that is sometimes made a step to the ease or to the prevention of a worse. Blessed be Thy goodness, which is pleased thus to make my bed in my sickness. Amen."

"And however, if I have less ease and more sorrow now, yet, O my God, I have the blessed hopes of rest and joy to come. And I can never bless Thee enough for the comforts of hope, that, after a patient and short endurance of my portion of evil things here, I shall be taken to the everlasting happiness of Thy heavenly kingdom. Amen."

"Moreover, O Lord, I receive my bodily sorrows as medicines to my soul. I bless Thee for all the lowly thoughts they give me of myself, and for all the discovery which I make of my errors thereby ; and for their taking off my fondness from earthly delights, and lifting up my heart to heavenly things, and to all the ways of preparing my soul for Thine everlasting mercy. Amen. And if I want health, and the relish of worldly comforts now, I owe Thee infinite thanks, O Lord ! for all the time I enjoyed them formerly, though all that time I had deserved to lose them. If I am deprived of some mercies, yet many, and most thankworthy, are those which I still enjoy." (Ps. xl. 5 ; Job i. 21.)

6. *On patience.*

The whole course of a sick-bed is a trial of patience; and if we have the fore-mentioned virtues, we shall have patience. For if we dare trust God, our fears of pain, or other accidents, will not make us uneasy. If our wills are resigned to His, we *shall not be unwilling* to bear what He sends, but meet our sorrows with humble and contented submission, instead of angry repining. If we are thankful to Him under our sickness, we shall bless Him *for what we have*, and not discontentedly complain for what we want. And therefore, when God calls any person to be sick, let him look on *patience* as the proper virtue of his state. Let him set himself to bear his pains with composedness, out of submission and resignation to the will of God, *quietly suffering* because He sends them. And let him remember always to humble himself under the Hand that smites him, and own it is just; and to kiss the rod, and confess it is for his good; and to receive the strokes with quietness, and *suffer without striving*, and bear them *without uneasy complaints*, and wait on God without fainting, and not sink under his load; but to support and stay himself on God, till His time come to send ease. He must not show anger with his disease or his medicines, with his *food or his attendance*. Let him blame his own impatience, and tax his own folly. And under all the uneasiness of his sickness, and temptations to impatience, let him often say one or other of these short prayers. "Shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Lord, I will be dumb, and not open my mouth, because it is Thy doing. Amen. And Thou orderest mine infirmities, as Thou orderest all things else, in number, weight, and measure; so that I know they shall not be too many, nor too heavy, nor continue more days and hours than Thou seest suitable to Thy goodness and my weakness."

If ease is long delayed, and his spirit is almost wearied, let him put up such petitions as these. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. Amen."

"Oh, tarry thou the Lord's leisure, O my soul. I know in whom I have believed, and in due season I shall reap if I faint not. Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Amen."

"Remember, O Lord, whereof I am made, and have compas-

sion on mine infirmities, and lay not more upon me than I can bear. Lord, increase my patience, or abate my pains. Amen."

If he is ready to think he can no longer bear, let him remember, the same grace that did enable him to bear it yesterday, is as powerful and as ready now to enable him to bear as much again to-day. Yea, and till we are tried, we none of us know what, or how long, we can bear. And resolution, by God's grace, can bear much, a great deal longer than we thought of. Any difficulty will conquer those who come prepared, not to bear and strive with it, but to yield.

If his thoughts are disturbed, and his devotions faint and broken, by reason of his weakness or pain, let him have patience with himself, and believe that God will have patience with him too, and exact no more of him, whilst he is in that condition. Under our infirmities, the Spirit helpeth us, by holy and affectionate, though unuttered, groans; and He who searcheth the heart hears them. Let him often say, "Lord! Thou rejectest not the broken spirit; despise not the brokenness of my devotions. Amen."

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise. Refuse it not out of my mouth then, O God! Amen."

Let him also be constantly mindful to show patience and thankfulness towards those who kindly attend about him; and not be fretful and uneasy, when things are not done for him just when and as he would have them. And let him often say, under any temptations to uneasiness with his attendants, "Lord enable me to receive all the pains which Thou sendest upon me, with patience; and all the kind services which they seek to do me, with thankfulness. Amen."

"Remember, Lord! for them, all their charitable services; but remember not my fretfulness in the acceptance thereof. Amen."

"Enable them to consider my weakness, and to pity and bear with it; and enable me to watch against it, and not to fall any more into it. Amen."

And to arm him yet more thoroughly with all this patience, let him set before his eyes the far greater trials and sufferings of the ever-blessed Son of God, Jesus Christ. Let him think within himself, that we are not to think much at suffering trials deserv'dly and for ourselves, when he refused not to suffer infinitely

greater, without having deserved to suffer any thing Himself, but merely in pity and kindness for others, yea, for His enemies.

Let him be reminded, that God has made pain the way to pleasure, and that Jesus bore pains before He was fixed in ease. That if the present pains are sad, eternal pains are infinitely sadder ; and that we need these here to prevent our falling under those hereafter. And instead of repining that we are left still to suffer the pains of this world, let him rejoice and give God thanks, that we are delivered by His mercy and our Blessed Saviour's merits, from the endless and insupportable anguish of the next world. Instead of repining, therefore, let him often say "Thy will be done, O my God ; give me my evil things here that I may have everlasting rest and joy with Thee hereafter Amen."

"I am content to be a member of an afflicted Saviour, and to *suffer with Him*, in hopes at last, through Thy mercy, to rejoice and reign with Him. Amen."

"It is enough, yea, too much, O Lord, for the servant to be as His master. Since He bore sorrows, I will not refuse them, but meekly bear them after Him whilst Thou pleasest, and patiently wait to be eased thereof at any time. Amen."

During all the progress of the sickness, devotions and pious thoughts, and set prayers or short ejaculations, are to be the sick man's vital breath ; and should *constantly* be sent up to God while he has spirit left to offer them. *Let him be frequently enjoying the prayers of the Church*, from the minister, or others. He may be often affectionately repeating the Lord's prayer, or any particular petitions thereof, or any of the forementioned short petitions and ejaculations ; which he may be often repeating, and devoutly offering up from his own memory

And let the sweet name of Jesus be often in his mouth, but oftener in his heart ; and let him think that the blessed name of a Saviour cannot be too much upon the soul, or too deep in the desire of a lost sinner. Let him therefore say, "Jesu, have mercy on me ! Jesu, Thou art the Rock of my hope. Thou art my Love, and my Life, and the chief Object of my desire. Lord Jesu, Thou alone art my Saviour."

And besides all the prayers and devout thoughts which he puts up thus for himself, let him also desire the prayers of

others. *Let him send to desire the prayers of the public congregation.* And when he takes his leave of any friendly visitants, let him desire them to remember him in theirs; showing thus, on all occasions, *that his eye is unto God in all his sickness*, and that he looks to reap most benefits from good prayers.

7. *On his carriage under the near approach of death.*

When sickness goes on to extremities, and death approaches, that calls louder to him to trim up his lamp, and dress his soul to meet the Bridegroom; but it is only with the same habits whereof I have been hitherto speaking. Let him welcome death when God sends it, and say, "Lord, my times are in Thy hands, Thou knowest best when it is fit for me to depart this world; and Thy time shall be mine; I am now willing to come to Thee, since Thou seest fit to call me. Amen."

If the dying person have lived ill and loosely, he has reason, indeed, if God please, to desire to live longer, that he may learn to live better.

And when he is near about to leave the world, he may take a pious and solemn leave of it. Let him call in his parents if he has any, to ask their pardon for any offence he ever gave them, and to beg their blessing, and give them his thanks for all their love and care of him. And also his children, to give them his blessing, and to charge them to keep upright and constant in God's fear, and in loving and helping one another. And likewise his friends and family and dependants, to receive his last farewell.

Let him profess, that he dies in the faith of Christ, and repeat the Creed; and that he hopes for the acceptance of his faith and repentance in *the Unity and Communion of Christ's Church*, in which he dies; and particularly as a steadfast and sincere, though unworthy, member of the Church whose declared belief he professes, whose way of worship he heartily receives, and in whose peace and communion he has hitherto lived, and now dies. Then let him profess that he takes leave of the world in peace, and forgives all, both present and absent, as he desires himself God would forgive him. After which, let him send messages to absent friends, whose reformation he desires, whose peace he seeks, or for whose love or favours he would express thankfulness.

Then let him charge all about him to keep constant in the faith, *and firm in the Unity of the Church*, and endeavour to confirm them in the ways of piety, sobriety, justice, and charity; and to warn them against falling from any of them for any interests or enjoyments of this world. Then let him exhort them all to keep peace among themselves; and desire all their prayers to assist him in his agonies. And so recommend them all to God's mercy, praying that He will keep them all steadfast in His fear, and safe under His care, whilst they live; and give them all comfort when they come into his condition; and bring them all at last to meet together again in His heavenly kingdom.

After he hath taken such religious and solemn leave of all his friends, he has nothing left to do, but whilst his strength serves, to employ his spirit in holy thoughts and desires, as he did before, and devoutly and willingly wait God's time for his change. And under this expectation, let him often say, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. (Ps. lxxiii. 26.) Lord, strengthen me in my last agonies, and guard me from all frights and molestations of the enemy. Amen."

"I have a good Master; for Jesus, that most blessed of all names, is my Master, and I will neither be afraid nor unwilling to go to Him. For whom have I in heaven, Lord, but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire besides Thee. (Ps. lxxiii. 25.) Yea, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. xlii. 1, 2.)

"Lord, I come to Thee; receive me out of Thine *abundant mercy*. I come to Thee; and him who cometh unto Thee, *Thou wilt in no wise cast out*. (John vi. 37.) Lord Jesu, receive my spirit. Amen. Receive me according to Thy word, and I shall live, and shall not be disappointed of my hope." (See John xiv. 19; Luke xii. 37.)

"Lord! wash my soul in Thy blood, that it may be presented without spot unto Thee. And let me die in Thy favour, and rest in peace, and rise again in glory. Amen."

"Strengthen me, O my God! in my agonies. As my strength fails, let my pains wear off. But when my strength fails, let not my faith fail. Even in death let me trust in Thee. And the

nearer I am drawing to Thee, the more do Thou manifest Thy mercy unto me, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen."

"Deliver me, O Lord, from fear of death, and from all violent disorders of a troubled fancy, or painful delusions of my ghostly enemy. Oh! let not him be able now to disturb and terrify me, or any way to prevail against me. Amen."

"Have me in Thy custody, O Holy Father! for nothing can take me out of Thy hands. And give Thy holy angels charge to stand about me, to guard and receive my poor soul at my departure, and to conduct and carry it to the blessed receptacles of rest and peace. Amen."

"O Father, pity me as a father pitieth his children, and receive me for whom Thou hast laboured, and hast made me what I am. O Jesu, Saviour of sinners, save me whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood. O Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier and Comforter, now finish in me thine own work, and comfort my fainting spirit. O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, I have humbly served and feared Thee, though in much frailty, in my life, receive and comfort me now at my death. Amen, Amen."

"It is I; be not afraid."

Thus, when the storm of life is high,
Come, Saviour, to my aid;
Come when no other help is nigh,
And say, "Be not afraid."

Speak, and my griefs no more are heard;
Speak, and my fears are laid;
Speak, and my soul shall bless the word—
"Tis I: be not afraid."

When on the bed of death I lie,
And stretch my hands for aid,
Stand Thou before my glazing eyes,
And say, "Be not afraid."

Before Thy judgment-seat above,
When nature sinks dismay'd,
Oh, cheer me with a word of love—
"Tis I: be not afraid."

LYTE.

Propositions for the Sick.

FROM

BISHOP ANDREWES AND OTHERS.

1. *Concerning the wisdom and providence of God in ordering all afflictions.*

You are persuaded that no sickness or cross cometh by chance to any one; but you believe that it is God who sendeth them, without whose providence they fall not on us.

2. *Concerning patience and thankfulness required in the sick.*

You are not only to take this sickness patiently (Ps. xxxix. 9; 1 Sam. iii. 18), but even to give Him thanks for it, as for a wholesome medicine; especially considering that although we, in the time of our health, have forgotten Him, yet is he so merciful, that He giveth us not over with the world; but, for all we have often grieved his Holy Spirit, and fallen from grace, He visiteth us again. And that, if it had not been His will to show mercy by this chastisement, He could have suddenly taken you away with a quick destruction; and not have given you this time to bethink yourself, and to seek and sue to Him for grace. (Ps. xxvii. 16, xxx. 5, lv. 23, lxii. 8, lxxxix. 32, ciii. 9; Is. liv. 7, 8; Lam. iii. 32; 1 Cor. xi. 32.)

3. *Concerning contrition and repentance.*

“O Holy Spirit of God! penetrate my soul with Thy holy light, that I may discern my sinfulness, weep, and repent.”

Do you acknowledge yourself not to have lived so well as you ought to have done; but to have sinned, done amiss, and dealt wickedly?

Do you call to mind the years of your life spent amiss, in the bitterness of your soul?

Do you desire and pray to have your mind illuminated by God touching those sins you never knew, or which you once knew, but have now forgotten; that you may repent of them?

Do you desire to feel greater sorrow in your soul for your sins committed than you do? and are you grieved that you do not feel it? and do you earnestly pray for the spirit of true compunction and penitence?

Is there any special sin that lieth heavy on your conscience, for which you need or would require the benefit of absolution? (Ps. xxxix. 12, xxxviii. 3, 18, xli. 4; Is. xxxviii. 15; Ps. xxv. 6, 10, cxliii. 2, xxxiv. 18, li. 17, lv. 4, 5.)

Repent you of these your sins? that is to say,

Are you resolved, by God's grace, if He send you life, here after to strive to amend and live more carefully, and to avoid both those means and occasions that may provoke you to sin again?

Do you promise thus much in the presence of God, His grace assisting you?

4. *Concerning the belief of the sick.*

Believe you the Christian Creed, or confession of our most holy faith, once delivered to the Saints?

Believe you that you cannot be saved except you do believe it?

Do you give God hearty thanks that you were baptised into this faith? and do you desire now to die in the same?

Is there in your mind any scruple touching any matter of your faith or religion?

5. *Concerning forgiveness of enemies, &c.*

Do you forgive them that in any manner have offended you, as freely as you would be forgiven at God's hand? and do you likewise desire of God that he would forgive them?

Have you made, or are you willing to make, restitution for any injury done to others?

Do you acknowledge that you have sinned in pride of heart, not thanking the Giver of all good for His gifts?

That you have sinned in pride of clothing, in pride of beauty eloquence, or riches?

That you have sinned in envy, wrath, and seeking revenge?

That you have sinned in sloth, idle thoughts, and imaginations? in neglecting prayer and meditation?

That you have sinned in covetousness, by unlawful desires of riches, and have not had compassion on the miserable, as you ought to have done?

That you have sinned by excess in eating and drinking, uncleanness, unchaste thoughts, &c.?

That you have sinned in breaking the commandments of God, and have not loved Him above all things, nor sincerely worshipped Him, nor honoured His sacred name, but have used it lightly and irreverently? That you have not sanctified his sabbaths nor reverently used His word and sacraments, nor duly revered your parents and governors? That you have borne hatred? That you have taken or coveted your neighbour's goods—depraved his good name?

That you have not used the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the honour of God—the gifts of understanding, counsel, science, strength, and knowledge?

“O Blessed Jesu, I sue to Thee for mercy, and the forgiveness of my sins; graciously hear me, O Christ, and save me. By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, deliver me, O Christ, now, in the hour of my death, and in the day of judgment.”

O Lord, turn not Thy face away
From him that lies prostrate,
Lamenting sore his sinful life,
Before Thy mercy-gate.

Call me not to a strict account
How I have lived here:
For then I know right well, O Lord,
How vile I shall appear.

Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,—
This is the total sum:
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit;
Oh, let Thy mercy come!

From Poems, &c. for the Sick

Prayers.

A Prayer for Pardon.

Merciful and gracious Lord, long-suffering, and of great goodness; I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against Thee. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner: for Thy Name's sake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great; even for that Name, beside which there is none other given among men whereby we must be saved. Forgive my guilt, heal my sores, blot out my sins, and cleanse me from secret faults. For the tender bowels of the Father, for the bleeding wounds of the Son, for the unutterable complaints of the Holy Ghost, O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; for Thine own sake, O Lord my God. I recount my sins in the bitterness of my soul, and am moved with indignation. I abhor and chasten myself because my sorrow is not fuller. Lord, I repent, help Thou my impenitence; and more and more pierce, grieve, and crush my heart; pass by, forgive, and pardon all that I have done amiss. Spare me, therefore; for it is not difficult to Thy power, nor unbecoming Thy justice, nor unusual to Thy mercy, to spare a sinner. Thou Who hast created me, do not destroy me; Thou Who hast redeemed me, do not condemn me. Let Thy unbounded loving-kindness look down upon my misery; let Thy universal pity look upon my guilt. Weak, I betake me to the Omnipotent; wounded, I fly to the Physician. Blot out the multitude of my offences; renew the abundance of Thy mercies; for though I be defiled and blinded, diseased and even dead, yet Thou canst cleanse me; Thou canst enlighten and heal me.

Deliver me, O Lord, on the bed of sickness, in the hour of death, and *in the day of judgment*. Let not any baneful inclinations work me harm, nor any evil habit work my destruction. But keep me, I pray Thee, from vain, injurious, and impure imaginations; from pollutions of mind and body; and from the delusions of evil spirits, for the sake, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A Prayer for a Person suffering pain.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art a present help in time of trouble; O look graciously upon me, I most earnestly

beseech Thee ; and (if it be Thy blessed will,) send me ease and comfort in this time of my distress. Never let me murmur or repine under any affliction Thou seest fit to lay upon me. Give me a meek and quiet submission to Thy will, that I may wait with patience till Thou seest fit to deliver me. Suffer not the extremity of my pains to transport me into any rash or unbecoming expressions, or cause me to entertain hard thoughts of Thy providence, but, whatever evils or sorrows I may feel, let me still love Thee, and believe Thee to be a kind and merciful Father, even whilst Thou art smiting and correcting me.

And, O blessed Lord, that I may be enabled so to do, be pleased to strengthen me with the consolations of Thy Holy Spirit, and lay not more upon me than Thou wilt enable me to bear. Sanctify this affliction to me, that it may produce in me the fruits of a true and sincere repentance.

O Lord, hear me ; O Lord, help me, for Thy mercies' sake, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. Amen.—*New Manual.*

Ejaculations when suffering.

O blessed Lord, who scourgest every son whom Thou receivest, let me not be weary of Thy correction. Give me such a perfect submission to Thee, the Father of Spirits, that this chastisement may be for my profit, and that I may thereby be made a partaker of Thy holiness.

O Christ, who first sufferedst many and grievous things, and then enteredst into Thy glory, make me to suffer with Thee, that I may also be glorified with Thee.

O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver me not, I beseech Thee, unto the bitter pains of eternal death.—*Burial Service.*

O holy Jesus, Thou art a merciful High Priest, and touched with a sense of our infirmities ; Thou knowest the sharpness of my sickness, and the weakness of my person. The clouds are gathered about me, and Thou hast covered me with Thy storm. Lord, let Thy mercy support me, Thy Spirit guide me, that I may pass in patience, holiness, and perfect resignation. Let me rejoice in Thee, in the hope of pardon, the expectation of glory, in the sense of Thy mercies, in the consolations of Thy Spirit, and in victory over all temptations. Amen.

A Prayer for a Deaf Person.

O righteous Lord ! mine ears have been too much inclined and delighted to hear things which dishonour Thee, and corrupt me. And therefore Thou art just in stopping them, because I have misused them. But, Lord ! remember mercy, and open them again if it may seem good to Thee. Whilst Thou seest fit to continue me under this deafness, O Almighty Lord, give me patience contentedly to want the conversation of others. I know, alas ! and do lament that I am hereby debarred from hearing good words. But I will reckon it some compensation to me, that it keeps me from hearing evil too. For if my ears were open, O God, I should daily hear much more than I desire to hear, or than I ought to hear silently ; and should hear evil more often than I should find the heart and courage to reprove it. And therefore Thy will be done, O holy Father ! I receive my deafness patiently and thankfully, as being sent by Thee, and as daily keeping out much that would either corrupt, or trouble and afflict me ; and am content, whilst Thou pleasest, to be deaf to the voice of sinners, till Thou shalt either restore that sense to me again here on earth, or take me hence to hear the heavenly hallelujahs of angels and beatified spirits in Thy presence, for the sake of my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.—*Selected from Kettlewell.*

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THE SIN
OF
PROFANE SWEARING.

BY
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THE SIN OF PROFANE SWEARING.

SOME very intelligent persons have a strange and settled repugnance to reading religious Tracts. Without troubling themselves even to glance at their contents, they pronounce them to be nothing better than trash and twaddle, and cast them aside with contempt. And yet, these humble little messengers have accomplished most mighty results, and not a few of them are the productions of gifted pens.

We beg the reader not to lay this tract down until he has given it a careful perusal. If he is free from the Sin of Profane Swearing, the considerations which we shall present, may help to keep him from ever adopting so evil a practice. And if, on the other hand, he happens to belong to the unfortunate class, who are in the habit of taking God's holy Name in vain, this tract may be the means, in God's hands, of helping him to rid himself of it.

Although so many thoughtless and irreverent persons indulge in Profane Swearing, and think

it no harm, it must really be a great and dangerous sin, or the ALMIGHTY would never have taken the trouble to send forth a special command against it,—as HE did amidst the thunders of Sinai. Moreover, if people do not commit any offence against HIM, by using profane language, what could possibly be the meaning of that passage, in the book of the Prophet Jeremiah, [xxiii. 10]: “*Because of swearing the land mourneth?*” Here, you observe, that the very habit which is so freely and foolishly indulged in, the habit of Profane Swearing, is mentioned as the cause why God’s judgments were poured out upon the earth, in ancient days. And it becomes all, who thus venture to provoke the indignation of the high and mighty RULER of the Universe, to ask themselves whether the prevalence of this sin may not be one great reason why our own beloved country has been made to pass through such dismal years of mourning and wretchedness.

To take God’s name in vain, is to employ what is sacred and holy, for other than sacred and holy purposes; to deal with it lightly, and to treat it with disrespect and irreverence.

Now all persons thus dishonor His holy name, and show contempt for it, who bring it into

their ordinary conversation, to point a jest, or add force to what they say, or to fill up a gap which they find it inconvenient to supply, or to serve as a safety-valve for violent or excited passions,—or, when, in moments of madness, they call down the Omnipotent ONE, armed with all His terrors, to curse their enemies, and avenge their fancied wrongs. What a contrast between this frightful irreverence for God's Name, and the solemn way in which it is always referred to in the Holy Scriptures! The mention of that name should be carefully reserved, (as Sidney Smith has beautifully expressed it,) “for stupendous affliction, poured forth in eminent distress, appealed to before grave tribunals, and pronounced with solemn devotion, when the dearest interests of mankind are at stake. God has given us His Name as a support to human laws, as a security to human happiness; it is so great and serious a possession, the use of it of such vast importance, that the law takes it to itself, and pronounces it to be an offence against the public to use it, but in prayer.”

And what can possibly be more insulting to the DIVINE MAJESTY, or better calculated to arouse His fierce indignation, than the unholy

familiarity with His Name, which is manifested by the profane swearer, every day of his life? The lisping tongue of infancy is heard, giving utterance to this language of fiends; and with the old, the habit becomes so confirmed, that the third commandment of the decalogue is broken almost unconsciously; although, by no means, not without guilt. Others, again, who would be shocked to indulge in this open and undisguised form of profaneness, sin against God, by swearing by His attributes of Mercy, and Goodness, or by speaking His Name thoughtlessly, in seasons of surprise or anger. Boys and young men are apt to regard it as an evidence of pluck and courage, to interlard their language with oaths, and the miserable vice extends to all classes in society, and to every occupation of life.

Our readers must have patience, while we present a few plain considerations, why every one ought to abandon so dangerous a practice.

I. The first reason which we give is, that *there is no use in it*. As good Bishop Griswold was wont to say, "Profane swearing is the only unbaited hook which the devil fishes with!" It makes no one wiser, or richer, or happier. Deception, and knavery, and theft, and drunken-

ness, and murder, may be resorted to, under the expectation of temporal gain, or for the hope of short-lived enjoyment. But for the sin of profaneness, there is no such temptation nor apology. The greatest and most perplexing employments of life may be carried on, without the use of one profane word. When Sir Christopher Wren was engaged in building St. Paul's Cathedral, he caused a notice to be put up in different parts of the sacred edifice, informing the workmen, that all who were guilty of "the ungodly custom of swearing," should be instantly dismissed from his employ. And so, the top-stone of this glorious temple was carried safely to its place, without the aid of the profaners of God's Name.

An erroneous opinion has prevailed, that sailors and soldiers could never be kept in order, and made to do their duty, unless their officers had the privilege of swearing at them! Many examples, from land and sea, might be cited, to show the absurdity of this notion. A few must suffice. An English merchant, in fitting out a ship for India, told the captain that there must be no swearing among the crew, during the voyage. The captain did not object to the arrangement, but simply expressed his fears

that a habit which had become a second nature to seamen, might not be so easily cured. "And how can I break off, myself?" asked the honest man. "I will take care that you are reminded of your duty," said the owner. "Wear the ring that I will give you, and let the law of the vessel be explicitly known." Accordingly, he procured a ring for the captain, with this motto engraved upon it: "SWEAR NOT AT ALL."

The ship soon sailed, and, in due course of time, came safely back. On being inquired of respecting the subject, the supercargo declared, that with the exception of the first twenty days after leaving England, there had been no profaneness on board during the voyage. By this time, the old habit was completely destroyed, and the success of the experiment was complete.

Besides other good things which Colonel Gardiner accomplished, while serving in the English army, he put an end to profane swearing among the officers and soldiers under his control, showing what a Christian officer may accomplish, when he sets himself about it.

General Washington, in one of the "orders" issued for the direction of the American army, remarks that "The name of that Being, from

whose bountiful goodness we are permitted to exist and enjoy the comforts of life, is incessantly imprecated and profaned, in a manner as wanton as it is shocking. For the sake, therefore, of religion, decency, and order, the General hopes and trusts that officers of every rank will use their influence and authority to check a vice which is as unprofitable as wicked and shameful."

When our newspapers, some years ago, were giving us the first reports of General Taylor's victory at Buena Vista, they represented the old hero as using many rough oaths, while sending out his directions for the battle, or in response to those who brought him tidings of its successful progress. It was shocking to hear Christian men trying to apologize for such profaneness, as an almost necessary accompaniment of seasons of excitement and peril. Months afterwards, when the General happened to see some of these newspaper accounts for himself, he quietly observed, that, however badly he might have managed his tongue, at other times, he hoped that when the God of battles showed him such special favor, he had not ventured to use His Name profanely.

If captains of ships, and commanders of

armies, can manage sailors and soldiers, without resorting to profane language,—surely, no one else has any excuse for thus violating God's sacred law.

2. Another reason for refraining from profane swearing is, that *it is a flagrant breach of good manners.*

A well-bred person will not, intentionally, speak harshly in our presence, of those whom we love. The same rule *ought* to hold good, in regard to using the Name of God profanely, —a BEING whom all right-minded people reverence and adore. No gentleman, in his senses, will give utterance to any thing so low and vulgar as an oath. Long years ago, Mr. John Howe, being at dinner with some fashionable people, one of the company had a great deal to say in praise of Charles the First, and made some very severe remarks about his enemies. Mr. Howe, observing that he mixed many horrid oaths with his discourse, ventured to suggest that he had omitted a distinguishing excellence in the character of that unfortunate prince, and being requested to mention what it was, he quietly answered, that King Charles carried his politeness so far, that he was never known to swear an oath in common conversa-

tion. The reproof was taken in good part, and was never forgotten.

Another illustration which we have to offer, relates to one greater and better than any crowned head. While Washington was President of the United States, he was presiding one day, with his accustomed grace and dignity, at the head of his own table, when a guest made himself very conspicuous by his frequent use of profane language. At last, the General could restrain himself no longer, and deliberately laying down his knife and fork, he said, in a decided tone, and looking at the transgressor as he spoke, "*I thought we were all gentlemen, here!*"

Of course, the swearing ceased.

3. We insist, in the third place, that profaneness should be stopped, because *it is unkind and cruel.*

How often, in travelling in public conveyances, are ladies, and Christians of refined and tender sensibilities, to say nothing of clergymen,—obliged to sit in uncomplaining silence, while some thoughtless fellow-passenger shocks and startles them, by profaning the Name of the ALMIGHTY FATHER, and of that adorable SAVIOUR, who bought us with His blood!—

I say that this is done by *thoughtless* persons ; for I can hardly believe that, if they gave a moment's reflection to the subject, they would be thus unkind and cruel.

The celebrated Dr. Mason, being once on a journey, in a stage-coach, was exceedingly annoyed and distressed by the profaneness of an officer, who, in other respects, was a very agreeable man. When the passengers stopped for dinner, the doctor called the officer aside, and remarked, "I am sure you are not aware of it, sir ; but, during our ride this morning, you have repeatedly mentioned the name of a dear FRIEND of mine, in a most disrespectful way, and I beg, as a special favor, that you will not continue thus to wound my feelings." The officer expressed great surprise, and insisted that he was not conscious of having indulged in any personality. "Yes, yes," replied his fellow-traveller ; "you blasphemed the name of my HEAVENLY FATHER, than whom I have no dearer FRIEND !" It was a word spoken in season. May we not hope that this little tract may prove to be such a timely warning ?

4. Again, we enter a protest against profane swearing, *because it is sinful*. The simple fact,

that God forbids it, settles this point at once. See Exodus xx. 7; Levit. xxiv. 16; Hosea iv. 2, 3; Jer. xxiii. 10; St. Matt. v. 34-37; St. Matt. xxiii. 16-22; St. James v. 12, and other similar passages.

Many a man who would be terribly shocked at the idea of robbing a house, or committing murder, will utter the most dreadful oaths,—and think nothing of it. And yet, which is the worse, an offence against *man*, (as robbery, or murder would be,) or a sin against the MOST HIGH GOD?

5. Taking God's Name in vain ought never to be done, because *it is an offence which He will surely punish*. We might spend hours in relating well attested facts like the following:

A laborer in a stone quarry had one day fastened a heavy mass of rock to a rope, for the purpose of its being hoisted up, when the man who was to attend to the windlass, expressed his fears that the rope was not strong enough. The laborer below immediately answered, with a shocking oath, "Then let it crush me to atoms!" The wretched man had hardly thus dared God's vengeance, when the stone fell, and he was hurried, in a moment, into the presence of the ETERNAL JUDGE.

In the summer of 1796, a violent thunder-storm passed over the district of Montpelier; about a thousand French soldiers being encamped near the town. At a short distance from the camp, five of the soldiers were helping a husbandman, who had hired them to work in his harvest field. When the storm came on, the party took refuge under a tree, where the soldiers began to blaspheme God, for interrupting their labor; and one of them, in the madness of his presumption, took up his gun, and pointing it towards the skies, said that he would fire a bullet at HIM who sent the storm!

The husbandman was seized with horror, and fled from the spot; but he had hardly left it, when a flash of lightning struck four of the soldiers dead, and wounded the fifth so severely, that his life was despaired of.

Two soldiers, at Chatham, England, once laid a trifling wager, which could swear most oaths. After one of them had poured out many shocking ones, he hesitated a short time, and said, he could think of one more, which should be his last. He was not suffered to utter it, for he was instantly struck speechless, and so remained for about three hours, when he died. By order of his officers, his body was made a

public spectacle to the populace, soldiers, and sailors, as a salutary warning.

We have purposely avoided relating similar circumstances, much nearer home, being unwilling, even in efforts to do good, to give pain to surviving friends, who might recognize the persons referred to.

In cases where the ALMIGHTY does not send *temporal* judgments on those who blaspheme His holy name, it is certain that, if they die impenitent and unpardoned, HE has *Eternal* ones in store for them. Has HE not said, that *He will not hold them guiltless, who take His name in vain?* We may be sure that this future punishment will be all the more terrible, because we are not told what it will be.

The profane swearer may now laugh at the threatenings of God's word; he may turn a deaf ear to the warnings and exhortations of His ministers, and to the prayers and admonitions of His people. But "God is not a man that HE should lie; nor the Son of man, that HE should repent. Hath HE said, and shall HE not do it? or hath HE spoken, and shall HE not make it good?" (Numbers xxiii. 13.)

As Mr. Romaine was one day walking in the

street, he heard a man in great wrath, calling upon God to damn his soul. The clergyman stopped, and taking out a half-crown, said, "I will give you this, if you will repeat that oath!" The man started back and answered, "What! sir; do you think I will damn my soul for half a crown?" "As you did it, just now, for nothing," said Mr. Romaine, "I could not suppose you would refuse to do it for a reward!" The reproof went home to the swearer's conscience, and he replied, "God bless and reward you, sir, whoever you be. I believe you have saved my soul; I hope I shall never swear again, while I live!"

If some friend would write down the oaths which an angry man utters in the course of a single hour, and show him the shocking record, when he had regained his composure, it is doubtful whether he himself would not turn from it in disgust. And the profane swearer should remember that an offended God *is* keeping an account of his violations of the third Commandment, and that this account will be brought up against him at the final judgment.

Surely, we have presented reasons enough, why God's holy Name should no longer be pro-

faned. May our readers ponder these reasons well.

St. Chrysostom proposed a plan for breaking off this vile practice, which is worth a trial. "Would'st thou know," he asks, "how thou may'st rid thyself of this wicked custom of swearing? Every time, whenever thou shalt find thyself to have let slip an oath, punish thyself for it by missing the next meal. Such a course as this, though troublesome to the flesh, will be profitable to the spirit, and cause a quick amendment."

Let us all beseech our FATHER in Heaven, to "make us have a perpetual fear and love of His holy Name." And, whenever we read or hear the Third Commandment, let us devoutly say, "*Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!*"



PROCRASTINATOR'S

SOLILOQUY AND PRAYER.



THE SOLILOQUY.

ISAIAH lv. 6. *Seek the Lord while he may be found ; call upon him while he is near.*

HEB. iii. 7. *To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

ST. LUKE xii. 20. *To the rich procrastinator, in the Gospel, God said, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*

ST. LUKE xix. 42. *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

O MY SOUL, thou hast sought wealth, and hast either not found it, or hast found cares with it. Thou hast sought for pleasure, and hast found it, but no comfort in it. Thou soughtest honour, and hast found it, and perchance fallen with it. Thou soughtest friendship, and hast found it false ; society, and hast found it vain. And yet thy God, the fountain of all wealth, pleasure, honour, friendship, and society, thou hast slighted as a toy not worth the finding ! Be wise, my soul, and blush at thy own folly. Set thy desires on the right object. Seek wisdom, and thou shalt find knowledge, and wealth, and honour, and length of days. Seek Heaven, and earth shall seek thee. Defer not thy search, lest thou lose thy opportunity. To-day thou mayest find Him whom to-morrow thou mayest seek with tears, and miss. Yesterday is too late—to-morrow is uncertain—to-day only is thine. Aye ; but, my soul, I fear my too long delay hath made this day too late. Fear not my soul ; He that has given thee His grace to-day, will forget thy neglect of yesterday. Seek Him, therefore, by true repentance, and thou shalt find Him in thy prayer.

THE PRAYER.

O GOD, who like thy precious word, art hid to none but those who are lost ; and yet art found by all who seek thee with an upright heart, cast down thy gracious eye upon a lost sheep of Israel, strayed through the vanity of his unbridled youth, and wandered in the wilderness of his own invention. Lord, I have too much delight-

ed in my own ways, and have put the evil day too far from me. I have wallowed in the pleasures of this deceitful world, which perish in the using; and have neglected thee, my God, at whose right hand are pleasures for ever more. I have quenched the motions of thy good Spirit, and have delayed to seek thee by true and unfeigned repentance. Instead of seeking thee whom I have lost, I have withdrawn myself from thy presence when thou hast sought me. It were but justice, therefore, in thee, to stop thine ears at my petitions, or turn my prayers, as sin, into my bosom. But Lord, thou art a gracious God, and full of pity, and unwearied compassion, and thy loving kindness is from generation to generation. Lord, in not seeking thee, I have utterly lost myself; and if thou find me not, I am lost for ever; and if thou find me, thou canst not but find me in my sins; and then thou findest me to my own destruction. How miserable, O Lord, is my condition! How necessary is my confusion, since I have neglected to seek thee, and am therefore afraid to be found of thee! But, Lord, if thou look upon the all-sufficient merits of thy Son, thy justice will be no loser, in showing mercy upon a sinner. In His name, therefore, I present myself before thee. In His merits I make my humble approach unto thee. In his name I offer up my feeble prayer. For His merits, grant me my petitions. Call not to mind the rebellions of my flesh, and remember not, O God, the vanities of my youth. In flame my heart with the love of thy presence; and relish my meditations with the pleasure of thy sweetness. Let not the consideration of thy justice overwhelm me in despair, nor the meditation of thy mercy persuade me to presume. Sanctify my will by the wisdom of thy Spirit, that I may desire thee as the supreme good. Quicken my desires with a fervent zeal, that I may seek my Creator in the days of my youth. Teach me to seek thee according to thy will, and then be formed according to thy promise that thou living in me here by thy grace, I may hereafter reign with thee in thy glory. *Amen.*

A HYMN OF WARNING

1 HASTEN, sinner, to be wise;
Stay not for the morrow's sun;
Wisdom, if you still despise,
Harder is it to be won.

2 Hasten, mercy to implore;
Stay not for the morrow's sun;
Lest thy season should be o'er,
Ere this evening's stage be run.

3 Hasten, sinner, to return;
Stay not for the morrow's sun,
Lest thy lamp should cease to burn,
Ere salvation's work be done.

4 Hasten, sinner, to be blest;
Stay not for the morrow's sun;
Lest perdition thee arrest,
Ere the morrow is begun.

No. 5.



PENITENT SWEARER'S SOLILOQUY.

Exod. xx. 7.—*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

Zech. v. 3.—*And every one that sweareth shall be cut off.*

St. Matt. v. 34, &c.—*Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; but let your communication be yea, yea,—nay, nay for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

Jer. xxiii. 10.—*Because of swearing the land mourneth.*

OH what a judgment is here! How terrible! How full of execution! O detestable, O destructive sin! that leaves a cross upon the doors of generations, and lays whole families upon the dust; a sin whereto neither profit incites, nor pleasure allures, nor necessity compels, nor inclination of nature persuades; a mere voluntary; begun with a malignant imitation, and continued with an habitual presumption. Consider, O my soul, every oath hath been a nail to wound that Saviour, whose blood (O mercy above expression!) must save thee. Be sensible of thy actions and his sufferings. Abhor thyself in dust and ashes, and magnify His mercy that hath turned this judgment from thee. Go wash those wounds, which thou hast made, with tears, and humble thyself with prayers and true repentance.

HIS PRAYER.

ETERNAL and omnipotent God! before whose glorious name angels and archangels bow and hide their faces; to which the blessed spirits and saints of thy triumphant church sing forth perpetual hallelujahs! I, a poor child of disobedient Adam, do here make bold to take that holy name into my sin-polluted lips. I have heinously sinned, O God, against thee and against it; I have disparaged it in my thoughts, dishonoured it in my words, profaned it in my actions; and I know thou art a jealous God, and a consuming fire; as faithful in thy promises—so, fearful in thy judgments. I therefore fly from the dreadful

name of Jehovah, which I have abused, to that gracious name of *Jesus*, wherein thou art well-pleased. In that most sacred name, O God, I fall before thee; and for his beloved sake, O Lord, I come unto thee. Cleanse thou my heart, O God, and then my tongue shall praise thee. Wash thou my soul, O Lord, and then my lips shall bless thee. Work in my heart a fear of thy displeasure, and give me an awful reverence of thy name. Set thou a watch before my lips, that I offend not with my tongue. Let no motives entice me to be an instrument of thy dishonour; and let thy attributes be precious in mine eyes. Teach me the way of thy precepts, O Lord, and make me sensible of all my offences. Let not my dreadful custom in sinning against thy name, take from my guilty soul the sense of my sin. Give me a respect unto all thy commandments, but especially preserve me from the danger of this my bosom sin. Soften my heart at the rebukes of thy servants, and strike into my inward parts a fear of thy judgments. Let all my communication be ordered as in thy presence, and let the words of my mouth be governed by thy Spirit. Avert from me those judgments which thy word hath threatened, and my sin hath deserved; and strengthen my resolution for the time to come. Work in me a true godly sorrow, that it may bring forth in me a newness of life. Sanctify my thoughts with the continual meditation of thy commandments, and mortify those passions which provoke me to offend thee. Let not the examples of others induce me to this sin. Seal in my heart the full assurance of thy reconciliation, and look upon me in the bowels of compassion; that crowning my weak desires with thy all-sufficient power, I may escape this judgment which thy justice hath threatened here, and obtain that happiness thy mercy hath promised hereafter. *Amen.*

HYMN.

- 1 RISE, O my soul, the hours review,
When, aw'd by guilt and fear,
To heaven for grace thou durst not sue,
And found no rescue here :
- 2 Thy tears are dry'd, thy griefs are fled,
Dispelled each bitter care ;
For heaven itself has lent its aid
To save thee from despair.
- 3 Hear, then, O God ! thy work fulfil,
And, from thy mercy's throne,
Vouchsafe me strength to do thy will,
And to resist mine own :
- 4 So shall my soul each pow'r employ
Thy mercy to adore ;
While heaven itself proclaims with joy—
" One pardon'd sinner more !"

ON

THE OBSERVANCE

OF

THE SABBATH.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."—*Isaiah* lviii. 13, 14.

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ON THE SABBATH.

LEST in the extreme eagerness and hurry of our six days' pursuit after worldly things, we should forget that the seventh was reserved from the beginning, and consecrated to GOD and religion, the prophet Isaiah calls upon us to esteem the Sabbath 'a delight, the holy of the LORD,' and to "honor him" by "not doing thereon our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure;" (Isa. lviii. 13;) to cease entirely from every worldly pursuit, on a day so equally appropriated to the honor of God, and the happiness of mankind.

Without a *Sabbath*, that is, without a proper proportion of our time, appointed by divine authority, for the instruction of Christians in religious knowledge, and for the habitual exercise of devotion, no knowledge of that sort, and no spirit of piety and devotion are rationally to be expected from them. But in proportion as we give God his day, so proportionally shall the knowledge, the fear, the love of God prevail; and with them the practice of every virtue; for the religion to be acquired by a due observance of that day, is the only efficacious principle of real virtue, as that is of real happiness.

Taking it for granted, that all Christians agree in the fundamental truth, that the Sabbath is an institution of divine authority, and of infinite utility,

We will first inquire into *the nature of the institution*, that

In the second place, understanding clearly what it is, and why it was appointed, we may be the better prepared to make *a right application of it*, esteeming it "a delight, the holy of the LORD."

In the first place, as to THE NATURE of this institution; it consists in an exemption, by divine appointment, of one day in seven from all unnecessary labor, and business relating to our worldly callings and affairs. This appears from the meaning of the word *Sabbath*, which signifies rest, as well as from many passages of the Law and the prophets, which leave no room for a doubt on his head, either among Jews or Christians.

The nature of the institution will best appear from the consideration of its ends, which were, first, the refreshment of the body, exhausted and enfeebled by the labors of the preceding work days; which makes the bare resting on this day in some measure useful, and distinguishes it from mere idleness: and, secondly, the commemoration of God's resting on the seventh day from his work of creation; which is an end of infinite use and dignity.

Such, with regard to all mankind, and throughout all ages, were the purposes of ALMIGHTY GOD in appointing this solemnity from the beginning. But, in respect to the Church of CHRIST a greater still was added at the change of the day from

the last to the first of the Jewish week, namely, the commemoration of our Saviour's resurrection on our present Sabbath, when he rested from the work of his new creation.

The Sabbath, considered in these ends of its institution, is a most instructive memorial, a festival greatly exceeding all others in the joy and gratitude to which it calls us, for the being we have received from the hands of God; for the dignity of that being, which is ranked but "a little lower than that of angels;" for a whole world, created in order to our comfortable accommodation; for the conquest of sin by the sufferings, and of death by the resurrection, of our blessed Saviour, "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," who hath redeemed and renewed us, and brought us into the family of God.

Fixing our eyes attentively on these ends, and clearly understanding what the Sabbath is, and why it was appointed, we shall, so far, be prepared, in the second place, to make a right application of it, by honoring the Author of it, by "not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words."

During a total cessation from bodily labors and worldly cares, the vacancy of the mind, together with the recovering spring of the spirits, afford us a most incomparable opportunity of meditating, with more than common feeling, on the goodness of God, who, ere he introduced us to this scene of things, prepared and stored it, not only with necessities, but with every comfort, every ornament of life.

But this day calls us to yet higher knowledge,—to the exemplification of divine goodness, in still more astonishing, more affecting instances. We have hitherto mentioned only his bounty: his mercy will carry us further. After we had trampled on his bounty, and ungratefully abused it in all its kindest effects; after we had done every thing to provoke his displeasure, and brought on our guilty heads the sentence of everlasting shame and misery; from the throne of heaven, from the hymns and hallelujahs of all its hosts, he flew on the wings of inconceivable mercy; took our now wretched nature, and, with it, laid on his own guiltless head the load of all our crimes; suffered the punishment due to them; and, as the most hated of all criminals, was scourged, buffeted, crucified, by our own hands, that he might obtain for us "the glorious liberty of the sons of God:" and that we may be justified in our hopes of rising, after death, to eternal life, he rose again from the grave, and, to the end of the world is present with us, guiding our ignorance by his Gospel, and aiding our weakness by his grace. To acquire a competent knowledge, and to impress on our hearts a lively sense, of these delightful truths, proceeding from unbounded wisdom, power, and mercy, is the proper business of this day and to adore, in transports of joy and love, the exemplification of these attributes in our FATHER, SAVIOUR, COMFORTER, is the right method of keeping it holy. To forget this solemnity.

is to forget the creation of a world, formed solely for ourselves, at the very instant that this world employs all our thoughts, and engages all our desires ; is to forget our own being, to forget the Author of that being, of every thing that can support the body or save the soul ; and not only to forget, but to forfeit all.

What leisure is there for him who is busied all the week about his worldly affairs, to learn these truths ; or for him whose heart is hurried off at all other times, to the pleasure, profits, or vanities of this life, to recal it to the presence of God, but on this day ? The Sabbath, a time of rest for the body, and of application of the soul to God and his holy religion, should be understood as a remainder of original righteousness and happiness, enjoyed before the curse of labor and sorrow fell on offending mankind ; and as a type of the eternal rest promised to our souls in the restitution of all things. It should be considered as a day of grace, whereon the King of heaven and earth opens wide the gates of his palace, and invites his subjects to come and apply for his favors, and rejoice before him as on a festival celebrated alike by himself and his whole kingdom.

Is there then a time when the whole race of mankind are called to hear the voice of God, and to send up theirs in united prayers and praises for all his mercies, wished or received ? And is there a soul so lost to gratitude—so daring a rebel to God—as to be absent from an assembly where God is present, and where a world is on its knees ?

Industry, which in itself is a virtue, and a preservative, besides, of all other virtues, had never been suspended during a seventh part of our time, by a divine law, had it not been the intention of the Lawgiver to appropriate that time to the highest virtues of piety and devotion, and to the necessary acquisition of religious knowledge. It follows, therefore, that, while the body is at rest, the mind is to be employed in its own proper work of religious cultivation. And by what means can this be better accomplished than by reflecting, that “the Sabbath is set for a sign” between God and his people, to remind them of his infinite goodness to them, and of the services they therefore owe him ? It was surely appointed for our improvement, not for any benefit the all-perfect Being could have expected from the very best we can do. He who keeps it holy, will find in the end, that it hath kept him holy, and made him for ever happy. If this is a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving for all the mercies of God, more especially of creation and redemption, how can it be sanctified by those acts of devotion, if these mercies are not feelingly remembered ? and how can they be thus remembered, if they are not well understood ? and how can they be understood, if this opportunity for the purpose be not devoted to inquiries after God and his religion ?

Having now seen what the Sabbath is, to what necessary ends and sacred purposes it is dedicated by the express appointment of God himself—what can be thought of those who profane it

by worldly business, settling accounts, transacting bargains, taking journeys?—or by idleness, strolling, visiting, sleeping?—or by an affected and supercilious contempt, both public and private, of that instruction, that devotion, that gratitude toward God for all his blessings, to which the solemnity of the day so naturally and loudly calls us? Or what can be thought of those who, restrained by the laws from labor and business on this day, encourage their servants and dependents in amusements and diversions which the rules of decency can scarce tolerate on any other day? How little can they consider what sort of help-mates or servants those men will become, who have no sense of God and religion impressed on their minds? Is it not to be expected that they will be the veriest pests of the community?

Keeping the Sabbath agreeably to the ends of its institution, is, surely, to a good mind, or one that wishes to be good, attended with such comfort and satisfaction, as no other exercise of its powers in this life can possibly bring along with it.

The acquisition of knowledge is, in itself, exceedingly pleasant to an inquisitive nature. But the knowledge of things so surprising, so affecting, so exalted; knowledge so perfective of our nature and happiness, without which we can neither be good nor happy; without which we must be despicable and miserable beings for ever, is an attainment infinitely exceeding all others, in the benefit, the honor, the joy, it is capable on this day, if kept holy, of communicating. Hath God appointed a day, whereon he purposes to assemble us, in order to teach us, by his own words, how to live for ever happy? How should we long for that day! How entirely, how strictly sabbatical, without a command, should we ourselves make it, that our whole attention might be rivetted to his instructions!

If after hearing the word of God preached in the church, and reading it at home, each family should devoutly join in prayer,—and where proper voices are not wanting, should conclude the festival with a hymn to the glory of the great Benefactor,—how can we imagine a day more happily spent! Can small or trifling amusements fill up the vacuity in minds and hearts, where God, and all his works, and all his mercies, and all our gratitude, might have found room?

Consider, I beseech you, the dignity of your own nature, and the grandeur of those pleasures of which you are rendered capable, and to which you are invited; and disdain the very thoughts of such as sink you into littleness and baseness of soul. Consider that crowd of your poor fellow-creatures, who are governed more by your example than by all the laws of God and man. Consider your own souls, which cannot be happy if you lead theirs through wickedness to misery; and for the sake of both, for the sake of GOD the FATHER, who gave you being; of GOD the SON, who died to save you; of GOD the HOLY GHOST who is, I trust, now assisting you with his grace; consider carefully what has been addressed to you on this subject.

Consider it, you whose narrow circumstances allow you hardly any other leisure, but on the Lord's day, to learn that blessed religion without which you cannot possibly be saved from vice, infamy, and misery, in both worlds. Follow not an earthly master whom you see plunging into destruction, both of soul and body, by practices, on the Lord's day, too full of guilt to need the additional provocation of profaneness. Obey rather the will of God; "turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure" on God's holy day; and "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and honour him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words." Follow after CHRIST, who, although "Lord of the Sabbath," kept the day holy in acts of piety, devotion, and charity. The Sabbath was made for you, (Mark ii. 27,) that you might know the true religion, and learn to "worship God in spirit and in truth." Insist on your privilege, and may God give you understanding in all things, particularly in this, for the sake of CHRIST JESUS, our Redeemer.

DRUNKENNESS,

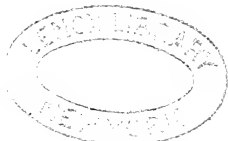
AND

ITS FRUITS.

"Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."—*Proverbs xxiii 29, 30, 31, 32.*

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ON DRUNKENNESS

THERE are certain vices, which, considered in themselves, do not appear to be ranked among crimes of the deepest die, and which, therefore, common opinion, and the customs of particular countries, seem to place only in the number of human infirmities. And yet, if these vices are judiciously weighed by the multitude of their unhappy effects, they will be found, perhaps, to look as black and frightful as those sins that call for the severest punishments from men, and the most terrible judgments from God.

That drunkenness is one, or rather the chief of these, will appear by showing that the *wo* denounced in Scripture against those notorious for drunkenness, is made up of the unavoidable effects it produces; and that this *wo*, or these effects, are too dear a price to be paid by a reasonable creature, for all the sensual pleasures of this life, did they even accompany this single sin.

It will be useful first to remove those excuses the drunkard usually brings in his defence, that when his punishment comes to be laid open, his understanding may not have these also to throw a veil over the gloomy and horrible prospect.

The drunkard's first excuse is charged to the account of good fellowship.

But, surely, friendship can never be founded on any thing else than an amiable and affectionate disposition, a likeness of temper, and true honesty of heart on both sides. Will strong drink bestow these upon us? Can mutual love and confidence be built on vice? On a vice, which, of all others, most effectually impairs the memory, and with it the sense of obligations? On a vice remarkable for disclosing and betraying secrets? On a vice that unavoidably hurries those who are addicted to it, to a speedy ruin of that foundation on which it raises the short-lived union of drunkards, by bringing them soon to an end, either of their tortures or of their lives?

And how does drunkenness promote the gaiety of conversation? Does it not rather destroy all conversation? For what is conversation, but the communication of rational and agreeable thoughts? The man of sense and spirits needs not the assistance of strong liquors; and is never more gay and cheerful, than after rising from a calm and natural night's rest. The drunkard may make his company merry; but do they not rather laugh at him, than with him? Do not silly people, like them, laugh at a natural fool, for no other reason but because they are delighted with the sight of one, who is even sillier than themselves? And if they should at any time express their admira-

tion by their mirth, certainly it is hard to say whether the stupid and empty jest, or the senseless peal of laughter that roars in its applause, is the stronger proof of folly.

The next excuse for drinking to excess, is, that it stupifies the cares and troubles of the drunkard; which arise from three different quarters; his ill state of health; the unfortunate posture of his worldly affairs; or the stings of his guilty conscience.

As to his ill health, it must be owned indeed, that in some cases, physicians prescribe wine, as St. Paul did to Timothy, to strengthen an enfeebled constitution. But this has nothing to do with the subject of drunkenness, a *vice*, which we would not be at liberty to practise, even to procure health, or to prolong life, were it in any measure useful for those ends. But so far is it from being either, that poison cannot more surely, though it may more speedily hurt us in both respects. The health of a man depends as absolutely on the right state of his brain and stomach, as his reason does; insomuch that it is impossible to hurt the one, without proportionally impairing the other. We are by no means to imagine, that the ill effects of intemperance cease with the act of drunkenness, or with the sickness of stomach, and aching of head that succeed. The frequent repetition of such excesses cannot but greatly distress a body, the health and life of which depend on parts so extremely fine and delicate, that David, reflecting on it with just apprehensions, says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made"—which reasoning our own experience confirms, both by the ill health and short life of drinkers of intoxicating liquors.

Now his excuse, who drinks hard to stifle his concern for the unfortunate posture of his worldly affairs, is, if possible, still more senseless and desperate. The drunkard will not leave himself sense enough to consider, that his vice does not tend to the improvement of his fortune—the only remedy, humanly speaking, his cares admit of—and that it can do no more than *for a time* make him forget he is in debt or distress. But if he cannot bear so much as to think of it, what will be his case, when neglect and extravagance shall have wasted all he has, so that his stupid remedy, and his ruined fortune, shall fail him both at once? Then, to which hand shall he turn him? "He cannot work: to beg he is ashamed." Most unhappy man! his misery admits of no change but a gaol; of no end, but self-destruction.

But great as the folly is of drinking to stupify a bodily disorder, or to drive away the cares arising from worldly distress; it is wisdom, if compared with that of drinking to stifle the stings of a guilty conscience. If one vice could furnish a cure, or make an atonement for another, we might, with some show of reason, apologize for all our vices. It is true, the drunkard may, for a time, drown his conscience in strong liquor, and silence its clamors with the noise of his roaring companions: but must he not sometimes be sober? And will not his conscience then be

heard? Remorse and dread of eternal punishment were given for a remedy against sin; and it is by them that God calls him to repentance and mercy. But because this voice of God is alarming and terrible, he flies to the devil for protection, although all he expects from that quarter, is the benefit of travelling some part of the road to eternal misery with his eyes covered. To act such a part as this, is to insult ALMIGHTY GOD, even under his rod, and to his face; is to give up heaven for ever; and with the obstinacy, the terror, the despair of a devil, to plunge blindfold into that misery, in comparison with which, the most violent agonies of conscience in this life are peace and pleasure.

The drunkard has other more common and accidental excuses for his vice. He says he is so exposed to company and business, that it is impossible for him to avoid drinking to excess. Then he is of so easy and flexible a temper, that he cannot resist the importunities of his friends, as he calls them. Thus he is for softening his vice into a sort of virtue, and calling that mere good nature, which his creditor calls *villany*, his family *cruelty*, and his God *rebellion*.

Let him now consider the wo denounced by ALMIGHTY GOD upon such a course; or, in other words, the miserable effects, as well temporal as spiritual, of his favorite vice, that he may compare those effects with his temptations, in order to see which is the greatest.

The first temporal ill effect of his drunkenness, which shall now be mentioned, as contained in the wo with which he is threatened, is *poverty*. This must certainly fall to his lot, however great his fortune might originally have been; for such extravagance and neglect of his affairs, as must accompany the vice of drunkenness, cannot fail to put it out of his power to support himself and his family in that rank of living to which they are used, in which they expected always to appear, and from which, therefore, they cannot be brought down without greater shame and anxiety, than people in lower life usually feel from want of bread. Now, this is poverty; and such poverty as his wife and children will find means to make him feel a share of; although there be so much left that he may drink on, and be the despicable slave of his worse than beastly appetite, as long as he lives; which cannot be very long, for his purse must soon prove too hard for his constitution, and lead him, through a course of pain and sickness, to an untimely death.

But when he, who has no more than enough to support his family, turns a drunkard, he soon runs out his little stock, and reduces the whole family to the last distress. In this situation, he finds himself surrounded with hunger, thirst, and cold. Abroad, he is mortified with continual repulses and contempt; at home, with the reproaches of a wife in distress, and children crying to him for bread. His profligate companions, who share the spoils of a heart-broken wife and ruined family, may cry up his good-nature, and call him jovial and honest: but reason,

common sense, and Christianity, call him a monster of villany and cruelty. And, to finish all, the curse of God pursues him into banishment, or a jail; where his goodly companions forsake him, and no man pities him; where, perhaps, he may live to hear that his wife is begging her bread, his daughter earning her's by prostitution, and his son sentenced to the state prison, or the gallows.

The next wo denounced by God, and the nature of things, is *universal contempt*. We all know how lightly the poor man is regarded, although his poverty is owing to no neglect or vices of his; but when poverty is brought on by vice or extravagance, then contempt and disdain are justly due to it. Now, he who once held up his head, and lived in credit, finds it extremely difficult to bear with patience the continual insults which those, who were once his equals, perhaps his inferiors, are but too apt to throw upon him, now that he is down. Nay, his poverty makes him take that for an affront, which was never intended as such. Add to all this, that he who was once high and haughty, is now forced to cringe and flatter for the very necessities of life, and to stoop to be the contempt of every low company that will bear him, for a little drink.

The third dreadful effect denounced in the wo against him, is *ill health*, and an *untimely death*. Of this, enough has been said already. Let him only ask whether he has not known many drunkards who have labored under all the complaints of old age, before they were thirty? who have been whole years a dying, ere they arrive at that stage? Nay, who at the best had so much distraction, so many headaches, so many untoward accidents, with innumerable other mischiefs, as were enough to sink their brightest days to a level with those of the sober, in which they had the least pleasure?

Were the wo of the drunkard confined to these temporal evils, it might be sufficient, one would think, to deter him from a vice so very grievous in its effects. But these evils, great and afflicting as they really are in themselves, are nothing, if compared to the *spiritual evils* that spring from, and punish the vice of drunkenness.

Criminal, surely, must that man be who destroys his health, and impairs his understanding. For in destroying his health, he shortens his life, and so far is guilty of self-murder, as he quits the world before the will of his Maker and Master calls him out of it. And in impairing his reason, he makes his life useless and burdensome to the world; and, as to the ends and purposes of life, differs from the self-murderer only in this; that whereas the self-murderer leaves the world when he ought to stay in it and do good; the drunkard, who also leaves it before his time, loiters awhile first to do mischief.

To have our passions in subjection to our reason, and our reason to true religion, is the indispensable duty of man; for he is thoroughly prepared for all manner of wickedness, whose

passions are inflamed to the highest pitch of fury, and whose reason is either wholly banished, or so extremely enfeebled, as to deprive it of all authority and strength. Now, it is the property of excess in drinking, to put a man exactly in this condition. All cares, human and divine, are alike to him, for "he neither fears God nor regards man." He mixes the awful name of his Maker with his most silly and ridiculous discourse. He has no more respect for the Lord's day, than for any other day. Nor does he indeed make any material difference between night and day; for he is one of those, who, according to the saying of Isaiah, "put darkness for light, and light for darkness." "His table," which, as the Prophet expresses it, "is full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean," is not more an abomination to the Lord, than the Lord's table to him.

Reason alone can teach that humility which becomes so dependent, so guilty a creature as man. But when this is banished by strong liquor, pride obtains the ascendancy over the heart; from which proceed insolence and rudeness, insomuch that every one will give the greatest, and none bear the slightest affront. The most unmeaning, and often the kindest expressions are wrested and resented. In the midst of pointed sarcasm, loud laughing, and boisterous talking, it would be very surprising if anger should not be roused; or when roused, if it should not vent itself in bitter reproaches, broils, bloodshed, and even murder.

We see by this time, that drunkenness travels with a huge train of other vices, and requires the whole width of the "broad way" to give it room. *Where* its journey is to end, we know: so that if the guilt and misery which attend it here, be not enough; there, at least, the drunkard having to his horror opened his eyes, and recovered the use of his reason, will perceive the truth of Scripture, and acknowledge that great, beyond all power of conception, is the *wo* denounced against them that "are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." God gave us reason, that we might know and practise our duty. To stupify it with strong liquor will not excuse us—for that is itself a very provoking sin; and one sin can never be made an apology for another: it can only increase the guilt, and double the punishment. God gave us natural spirits to be as cheerful as he approves of, or as a due sense of our sins should suffer us to be. God gave us health that we might turn it to his service, our own comfort, and the good of the community; particularly of our own family. Let us not then sacrifice it to the devil. God hath put it in our power to provide necessaries for our families; perhaps to relieve the distresses of the poor. If God send the sunshine and rain on our fields, and bless our labors with a plentiful increase; or if he prosper us in the way of trade; shall we immediately forget "who gave us all this abundance," and in a fit of drunken-

ness offer up to the devil the first-fruits of God's bounty to us? We wish, perhaps we pray, when afflicted with sickness, for health—shall we endeavor to drink it away when we have got it? We pray, likewise, for our "daily bread:" but is it to impose on Providence, by turning it to poison, instead of nourishment? Do we ask the necessities of life "to consume them on our lusts?" If thus "we ask bread," will not God serve us right, "if he give us a stone?" If thus we "ask an egg," can we complain "if he should give us a scorpion?"

Should the force of reason, the power of God's word, and the divine grace, be now struggling with your abominable vice—turn your heart to your duty;—fix a firm resolution against the vile unworthy sin;—let God have the victory. Flee the poison of the tempter—poison which will destroy both body and soul.—Turn unto the LORD, for he will have mercy, and to your God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Look to him for strength, and His strength shall be made perfect in your weakness. Be no more the bond slave of destruction, when Jesus who came to "set free the captives" stands ready to deliver you. "Through CHRIST strengthening" you, you can "do all things," even to the renouncing of that habit which is hurrying your body to the grave, and your soul to hell. In his name make the resolution—in his strength keep it—and BE FREE.

THE END.



PASTORAL ADVICE

TO

P A R E N T S .

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

It is the observation of Solomon, that if you train up a child in the way wherein he should go, he will not depart from it when he is old: and a celebrated philosopher expresses his opinion, "that of all men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education." Sometimes indeed even those who have been well brought up, disappoint the hopes of their friends; while others, whose education has been neglected, are by the grace and good providence of God led into the paths of true religion. Generally speaking, however, the observation above quoted holds good; it is generally true that men are made what they are by education. If they have been well brought up by sensible and pious parents, they are usually a comfort and joy to their friends, and an ornament to society; and when they quit this world, it is with a well grounded hope of future happiness through the merits of their Redeemer. If their education has been neglected, and they have been left to the influence of their own bad passions and appetites, and that of an evil world, they generally become a reproach to their parents, and a nuisance to those among whom they dwell; and are perhaps tempted to curse the hour in which they were born.

Such being my conviction of the importance of a right education. I am anxious to give what assistance I can to such parents, as have not as yet thought much upon this subject. I trust that you will attend seriously to what I say. Reflect, that your children—those little creatures which you now fondle in your arms, or see gaily playing about you—are all heirs of immortality. The *being* which they have now received through you will never end. They will—they *must*—live for ever either in happiness or in misery. They must be for ever either with the holy angels and saints of God in heaven, or the miserable companions of devils in hell. Can you

think of this without being very desirous to do what you can to work out their salvation? Reflect too that your children, amiable and pleasing as they now seem, yet inherit from you a nature prone to evil. They have come into the world with passions, and appetites, and desires, which, if not corrected, will certainly lead them to destruction. The great correcter and restrainer of the evil tendencies of their nature, is the preventing and assisting Grace of God, for which you must earnestly and constantly pray. But then you must endeavour to work together with that grace, and do what you can yourselves to "train them up in the way wherein they should go," (*Prov.* xxii. 6.)—"to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD," (*Eph.* vi. 4.) The meaning of these expressions is, that you should bring them up in the habitual practice of all the duties of the religion of CHRIST, and, as their understandings open, in the knowledge and belief of its doctrines.

But while it is your wish to accustom them to have respect unto all God's commandments without exception, there are some particular instances of duty which require your especial attention.

In the first place, bring them up in the habit of *obedience* to your authority. This is one of their leading obligations when they come to the use of their reason: "Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right." (*Ephes.* vi. 1.)—"Obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the LORD." (*Col.* iii. 20.)—Endeavour to accustom them to it from their earliest years. Even before they are able to speak, children shew that they have a will of their own. We often see little creatures of two or three years old expecting every one in the family to do their pleasure; their parents, and brothers and sisters, partly from mistaken fondness, partly to avoid trouble, and partly for amusement, encourage them perhaps in their wilfulness. But by so doing they are laying up in store much future uneasiness for themselves, and for the objects of their indulgence. I do not wish parents to thwart the wishes of their children without cause, or needlessly to find fault with them. But whenever there is good reason for it, they must assert their authority—kindly indeed—but firmly and steadily. Never suffer a child to obtain by crying any thing which you think improper for it. When it is very young, you may divert its attention from the forbidden object; if, after withholding it, you give way in consequence of the child's noise and clamour, it gains a victory over you, which will be most mischievous in its consequences. You teach the child to think, that it can at any future time gain its object by crying for it, and strengthen its wilfulness and disposition to passion. As the child advances in understanding, you may accustom it to give up what it wishes for from a principle of obedience, even though the forbidden object may happen to continue in its sight. This will contribute to lay the foundation of that self-denial, which is so necessary through life.

Occasionally it may be necessary to support your authority by actual *punishment*. Punishment must always be painful to a

parent, and you will employ it as seldom as possible. The necessity of it may be in a great measure prevented by the steadiness, and kindness of behaviour, which I have been recommending. When it is *necessary*, you must not suffer a mistaken fondness to prevent you from inflicting it. Seasonable correction is an instance and token of love. "Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (*Heb. xii. 6.*) Remember the observations of Solomon, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (*Prov. xiii. 24.*) "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it from him." (*Prov. xxii. 15.*) "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (*Prov. xix. 18.*) "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (*Prov. xxiii. 14.*) Reflect upon this last passage, which represents the efficacy of punishment in delivering the soul from hell. And is it not worth while for a parent, to give himself and his child some pain and uneasiness *now*, rather than run the hazard of its perishing everlastingly?

I do not consider these passages as prescribing any particular sort of punishment. The slighter the punishment the better, provided its end be answered. And perhaps, generally speaking, almost any kind of punishment is better than *beating*. But though moderate, it should be *certain*, if the offence for which it is threatened be committed. Be true to your word in every thing. If you tell a child that you will punish him if he acts in such or such a manner, be sure to inflict what you threaten, if he persists in the forbidden line of conduct. Make always the greatest difference between inadvertence or accident, and wilful offence or obstinacy. Let the punishment be in proportion to the guilt of the child, rather than to the loss or pain which you suffer yourself. But if you suffer a foolish fondness for your children, an unwillingness to put them to present pain or uneasiness, or to see them cry, to prevent you from punishing at all, when punishment is really expedient, you act with cruelty to your children, you act as if you hated them.

It is of the utmost consequence to the infliction of *punishment*, as in the whole business of education, that the two parents should mutually support and assist each. If when the father punishes a child, the mother should weakly call it to her to sooth and pity it, as if it had been hardly dealt by, the end of punishment is entirely defeated, and the injury done to the child in every point of view of the most serious description. Remember the sore judgments upon Eli and his house, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." The young men perished in their iniquity, and the whole family was reduced to the extreme of wretchedness. Of Adonijah it is said, that "his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?" (*1 Kings i. 6.*) He had suffered him to have his own way, and had spoilt him. The case seems to have been the same with his brother Absalom
and,
often

The consequence was, they both died by a bloody death in the flower of their age. Beware of spoiling your children: a spoilt child is a trouble to itself, to its parents, and to all within its reach. It is spoilt for this world, and, what is worse, spoilt for heaven. Some thoughtless parents are in the habit of saying that their poor children are likely to have trials and hardships as they grow up, and therefore they give them their own way now. Such conduct proceeds from ignorance, and is in reality cruelty to their children under the pretence of kindness. It is contrary to the voice of reason and Scripture, which both require that children should be restrained from following their own wills and humours, and that they should be punished when punishment is necessary.

But then never inflict punishment as if you took delight in it: never chasten them *for your own pleasure*, or by way of giving vent to your anger or vexation. "Correct not in anger," is an excellent maxim. If you are in a passion with your children, wait until you are cool before you punish them. When cool, you can correct them with judgment and moderation, which will not be the case when you are under the influence of passion. Never *scold*, or abuse them with reproachful language. Scolding never does good, but only serves to irritate, or injuriously to frighten them. To *swear* at them is dreadful. On the whole of this part of the subject keep in mind the admonition of St. Paul, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to *wrath*, lest they be discouraged," (*Eph.* vi. 4. *Col.* iii. 21.) Be careful not to *discourage* them by undue severity, or by harshness of manner. If you give way to violence of temper, and angrily beat or scold them, you will provoke them to anger, will lessen their respect for you, and deaden their love.

Endeavour as much as possible to win your children to their duty by kindness and affection. Love to you is implanted in their nature. Do nothing that may needlessly weaken it. "Our LORD observes, that if any man love him he will keep his word, and the assertion is applicable to the present case. The more your children love you, the more will they regard your instructions and admonition."* Be kind and gentle to them in your look and manner. Comply in things indifferent with their wishes and inclinations; and contribute as far as you reasonably can to their pleasures and amusements.

Cultivate in them not only love to yourselves, but a general spirit of *kindness* and *good-will* to all within their reach. Teach them, very early, that it is their duty to love their fellow creatures as themselves, and to do to every one as they would be done by. Lead them gently to examine themselves by this rule; and whenever, in word or deed, they break it, try in a kind way to make them sensible of their fault. Diligently labour to get the better of their disposition to *selfishness*. Selfishness is one of the most rooted evils of our nature. Teach them, when they see another, especial-

ly a brother or sister, enjoying any pleasure, to be as glad as if they enjoyed it themselves, and on no account to be jealous or envious. Accustom them readily to give up to each other, to sacrifice their own wills and wishes, to take a pleasure in doing good-natured and obliging actions.

You must bring them up to be *kind*, not only towards man, but also to *brutes*. Little children, from mere thoughtlessness, often put such animals as fall into their power to great and unnecessary pain. Never suffer them in pure wantonness to beat a horse or dog, or any other animal. Never permit them for mere amusement to rob a poor bird of its young, or to torment and tease any living creature. To see a child for its sport hunting domestic fowls, or piercing an insect in order to make it whirl on a string, is painful to every feeling mind.

Be particularly careful to bring them up with a sacred regard for *truth*. This habit is of the utmost consequence to their happiness both in this world and the next. Children when not properly instructed are very prone to be regardless of truth. When any blame has been incurred, they often try to throw it from themselves on some other person; to defend themselves by false excuses; or perhaps to invent charges against those, whom they wish to put in the wrong. In short, from their earliest years, they are by nature too ready to "go astray, and speak lies." Even when their wishes or their interests are not concerned, they frequently make little distinction between truth and falsehood, and relate events, or give them their colouring with little attention to accuracy.

Try very anxiously to put a stop to these bad habits. Teach them the hateful nature of falsehood in the sight both of God and man. When you think that they have done any thing wrong, or occasioned to you any loss or damage by carelessness, take care lest by the violence or severity of your manner you frighten them into a lie. By all means encourage a frank and open confession, and let such confession generally save them from punishment; though if they have acted wrong, you must try to make them sensible of it in a serious though kind manner. In all your intercourse with your children, shew a scrupulous regard to truth yourselves. Never deceive them at any time, even in their earliest youth. Always be as good as your word either in promises or threatenings. Do not allow either yourselves or your children to tell falsehoods in joke. A disregard for truth in matters of jest, is apt to lead to a disregard for it in things of consequence.

Teach them to be *humble*. Pride was not made for man; and it is from pride and self-conceit that many of the crimes, and much of the misery, that prevail in the world have their origin. The advice of St. Peter is "all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the lowly." Endeavour to make your children enter into the spirit of this Scriptural exhortation: make them understand, that pride is the parent of ill-humour and quarrelling, and too often

of malice and hatred; and that true honour, peace, and comfort, spring from humility.

Connected with this part of the subject is vanity of person or dress. Your children should be as clean and neat, as your circumstances will permit; but check from the beginning every disposition to *finery*. The foolish vanity of mothers sometimes tempts them to indulge their children in a taste for dress, beyond what their situation in life requires, or their means allow. Such a taste is natural in children, and if encouraged instead of being checked, will grow up with them, and foster a silly levity of mind, and too probably betray them into dangerous and deadly sin.

As soon as their minds are at all able to receive it, endeavour gently and gradually to instil into them the knowledge of the truths of religion. This appears to be particularly meant by the exhortation to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD." When very young, they may be made to understand that they are at all times in the presence of God, that he sees every thing that they do, and hears every word that they speak; and that he is displeased whenever they use any bad words, or do any bad actions. When a little older, you may accustom them always to bear in mind the recollection of the great account which they must one day give before the judgment seat of CHRIST, and of the never ending state either of happiness or of misery in which that judgment will place them. You will often remind them of the proneness to evil which they brought into the world, and of their many actual transgressions; they will thus be prepared to understand their want of a Redeemer and a Sanctifier. This will lead you to explain to them the method of man's redemption by CHRIST, and the means by which they may obtain the help of the HOLY GHOST.

Bring them early into the habit of *praying* to God every night and morning. Never rest satisfied with their repetition of the words of a prayer, but strive to make them enter into the meaning of what they are saying, so that their hearts and thoughts really accompany their lips.

Often hear them repeat parts of the Church Catechism yourselves. Try whether they understand it; explain to them its meaning; and carry it into their daily and hourly practice. For instance, are they guilty of falsehood? Remind them that lying is one of the works of the devil, which at their baptism they engaged to renounce. Do they swear, or take God's name in vain? Tell them that God will not hold guiltless, but will surely punish, those who thus break the third Commandment. And in like manner remind them of all other parts of their duty as occasions occur. These things you must with kindness and seriousness impress upon your children over and over again, as they are able to attend to them. There must be line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. It is a care which you must never give over. You know the direction of the LORD, by Moses, "These things which I command thee this day shall be in thine

heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children ; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down ; and when thou risest up." (*Deut.* vi. 6, 7.) You are to take every opportunity of impressing upon your children religious truths. In particular you must employ in their instruction much of those parts of the LORD'S day which are not devoted to public worship. Surely it is better to employ the rest of the sabbath in this manner, than in careless talk, in noisy pastimes, or in listless indolence.

Much assistance in acquiring and preserving the knowledge of religion may be obtained from being able to *read*. Most parents are properly anxious to give this advantage to their children ; but are sometimes not sufficiently careful in making the most of the opportunities in their power. When your children are put to school, take care that they are regular and constant in their attendance. By frequently absenting themselves, they break into the good order of the school, and hinder their own progress.

When they are taken from school in order to their earning something to their maintenance, they should make a point of keeping up at home what they have learnt, if not of adding to it. I have often been grieved to find, how soon boys, who when at school could read correctly and regularly, forget what they have learnt, so as hardly to be able to get through two lines together without hesitation. This evil would be prevented, if their parents would accustom them to read aloud for five or ten minutes every evening after the labours of the day are over. Sunday schools may be particularly useful, in keeping up the reading of those, who go to work during the week. It is indeed to young people of this age that they are of most use, and their parents should gladly take advantage of them. It is very desirable that you should prevail on them frequently to learn by heart a verse or two of Scripture. For this purpose you should choose such passages as relate to the leading doctrines of the Gospel, or to those duties and those temptations, of which from their situation in life they particularly need to be reminded.*

Lastly, try to keep your children from all *bad company*; and above all set them a good example yourselves. Children are naturally prone to imitation, and are more influenced by what they see than by what they hear. You can hardly expect them to mind you, when you exhort them to keep the laws of God, if you habitually break those laws yourselves. Let them never see you give way to excessive anger or violence of temper. Let them never see you overcome by liquor. Let them never hear you curse or swear, or in any other way speaking unadvisedly with your lips. It has been well and strongly said, "to give children good instruction and a bad example, is but beckoning them with the head to shew them the way to Heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them in the way to hell." To your other cares for your children you

* See the selection of texts at the end of this Tract.

must add fervent prayer for them to Almighty God. Without his blessing all your labour will be in vain. You must implore him to send down upon your children the constant influences of his Spirit to assist them in getting the better of their corruptions, and in going on from strength to strength in the paths of virtue and holiness.

The religious education of your children will require from you considerable pains and unceasing attention. Such pains and attention you will think well bestowed when you reflect, that the happiness of your children both in this life and the next is at stake. Think what you would feel, if in consequence of your neglect your children should grow up to be a reproach to you, and a curse to themselves; still more think what you would feel, if at the day of judgment you should hear pronounced upon them the sad sentence of "Depart ye cursed," and should be then sensible that they might have avoided it, had not you neglected their education when young.

If on the other hand you so train them up in the way wherein they should go, so fix in their minds good principles and good habits, that through divine grace they never depart from them as they grow old, great indeed will be your reward; you will look forward with humble hope to their being your crown of rejoicing at the last day. United with them in humble reliance on the merits of your Redeemer, you will meekly stand before his throne, and say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (*Heb. ii. 13.*)

I subjoin references to a few passages of Scripture to be learnt by heart by children, and explained to, and impressed upon them by their parents. The number may easily be enlarged.

God the Maker and Preserver of all things, and every where present. Acts xvii. 24—28. Psalm xxxiii. 6. Heb. xi. 3. Matt. vi. 26—30. Psalm viii. Psalm cxxxix.

Redemption through CHRIST. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Eph. v. 2. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. liii.

Necessity of divine grace, and means of procuring it. Zech. iii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13. James i. 5. Luke xi. 9—13. Rom. viii. 26.

Resurrection and future judgment. Acts xxiv. 15. Rev. xx. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. John v. 28, 29. Matt. xxiv. 36.

Christian practice, &c. Luke ii. 51, 52. Mark x. 13—16. Eph. iv. 20—32. Eph. vi. 1—3. Col. iii. 1—4. and 8—10. and 12—17. Gal. v. 14. and 22—26. Titus ii. 11—14. and iii. 1—7. Heb. xii. 5—11. Rom. xii. 1—3. and 9—21. Rom. xiii. Rom. vi. 1 Cor. xiii. 1 Pet. ii. 20—25. 1 Pet. iii. 8—18. 2 Pet. i. 5—8. Psalm i. xv. xix. xxiii. xxiv. xxvi. xxxii. xxxiv. xxxvii. xlii. xlii. li. xc. ci. ciii. civ. cvii. cxix. No. 133.

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No. 136.

ON

REMEMBERING OUR CREATOR

IN THE

DAYS OF OUR YOUTH.

WE all know that we shall have to remember our Creator at one time or another. We know very well that He has many ways of *inviting* us to remember Him. "The sun, that He makes to rise upon the evil and upon the good: the rain, that He sends down upon the just and the unjust: the fruitful seasons, by which He fills our hearts with food and gladness:"—these are some of the ways by which our Creator *invites* us to remember Him. Then again, there is the Lord's day in every seven, and the preaching of the Gospel of salvation, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; at which time His tables are spread before Christians, and He invites us all to come and eat the bread of the soul, and drink at the well of life. "Do this (saith He) in remembrance of Me."

But we know very well that our Creator has also the means of *making* Himself remembered; and that He will not always suffer Himself to be forgotten: He has ways and means by which He can *make* us remember Him, whenever He may please. The sword, the famine, the sickness, the pestilence, the death-bed, the last trumpet, "the worm that dieth not," "the fire that is not quenched:" these things are all in our Creator's power, and at His command.

Such a being cannot be remembered too soon. No one here will venture to say that there ever yet lived a man who remembered God too much, or began to fix his thoughts upon Him too soon.

What then is to become of those who seldom or never think of Him? Who only remember the all-present God, when something strange or sudden puts them in mind of Him; and who say, "Oh! there is yet time enough to remember my Creator." Why, they might as well say when death comes, "There is yet time enough to die." What is to become of such persons, if they should be cut off in this state of forgetfulness? Surely evil and misery must be,

their lot for ever: for what *good* thing would they be *able* to enjoy hereafter? What are their hopes?—They hope for nothing. What happiness do they promise themselves!—None: for they cannot have such things as hopes and happy promises, while they forget God, who is the author and giver of them. And, besides, *we* may never arrive at old age at all; there may never be granted to us a time some fifty years hence, in which we may call back God to our thoughts. Between us and old age there *may* be a great gulf fixed, which we must never pass: and if *this* were the only reason for remembering Him *now*, in the days of our youth, ought not this alone to be enough?

But there are other reasons for remembering our Creator in the days of our youth. The days of our youth are the days of our blessings. It would be hard to find, throughout the whole earth, a more glorious and interesting object, than youth just entering into active life: just “rejoicing as a giant to run his course.” Set the young by the side of any other animals in the creation: compare a young person with the bravest beast or the finest bird; and what a difference! Nay, compare a man in his youth and strength with another man in his age and weakness: and what a difference! In the days of our youth we enter into life with a shower of God’s blessings upon our heads: we come gifted with the choicest gifts of providence: we come furnished with strength of body, with quickness of limb, with health and power of constitution, with every thing to fit us both for labour and for enjoyment. If the young have not enough wordly store laid up for them, what matters it?—they have that which is better: they have the power given them of obtaining enough by honest industry: their senses are sound and quick: their spirits are brisk and lively: they shake off cares and sorrows, whenever such things try to fasten upon their minds: and *they* find enjoyment and gratification where the old seldom see any thing but pain, vexation, and disappointment.

But above all, in the days of our youth, the mind and the memory which the Almighty has bestowed upon us, are then all fresh, alive, and strong. Alas! we seldom think what an astonishing gift is that understanding which we enjoy, that bright light which the Holy One has kindled within us. We seldom think what a gift that is, until our old age comes, when we find that understanding wearing away, and that light becoming dim. Then shall we feel bitterly, most bitterly, what it is to have enjoyed, in the days of our youth, that privilege which seems to have been denied to all the other animals around us: namely, the privilege of knowing that there is a God: the privilege of even barely thinking upon such a Being: and more than that, the privilege of studying and understanding the wonderful variety of His works, of observing the ways of His providence, of admiring His power, His wisdom, and His goodness: and all this, and even more than all this, in the days of our youth, when the mind is all on fire, brisk, clear, and powerful, and the memory strong and good, and when the place which ought

to be the dwelling-place of wisdom and good thoughts, has not yet been first filled with crimes, and sorrows, and anxieties.

In the days of our youth, too, our hearts are warmest, our feelings naturally strongest and best. We have not as yet mixed much with the world, where we often lose our purest and kindest affections, and in return are taught the bitter lessons of selfishness, avarice, deceit, and suspicion. The hopes and the friendships of the young have not been checked by disappointment: their kindness and generosity have not yet been blighted by cold ingratitude. The young seem dressed out in all the riches of their Creator's goodness: the blessings of health and strength, and a sound mind and memory, and a warm and open heart are theirs. Such are the gifts with which the young are blessed. And now do we ask whether such persons should remember their Creator? What! must not the Lord of health, and strength, and memory, have a place, in the memory which He Himself has given? If nothing else called upon the young to remember God, one would think gratitude might lead them to do it; but, alas! our gratitude is cold. If there were only human gratitude to trust to, where should we find one heart on earth, that would rise of its own accord, and pour forth its willing offering of praise and thanksgiving to that liberal God who poureth His benefits upon us? We want something stronger, something more stirring, than human gratitude, to make us remember our Creator in the days of our youth. Let then the young consider that when God gives even the smallest gift to the smallest creature, He does so that some certain use may be made of that gift. Will you then believe that He has glorified you with such powers, such riches of mind and body, and yet that he has left you to manage His blessings, just as your natural heart and your own wayward fancy may lead you? Really and truly do you believe that you have had all these gifts from God, that you might trifle with them, and spoil them as children do with toys? You cannot believe it: but can you not believe that these things are given you to be used aright, to be used in the service of Him who gave them? We know and feel in our hearts that they were given us for great purposes: that they are not at our own disposal: that God will require the fruits of His own gifts: that they are to be used as instruments of righteousness unto Him: that if we yield them as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, then the wages of those things is death. We know and feel in our hearts, that if we sacrifice our health and strength to drunkenness and debauchery; if we give up our mind to pride, vanity, covetousness, or uncleanness; if we do not use God's gifts, for the purpose both of understanding His will and obeying it; if we do not use His gifts for the purpose of worshipping Him in spirit and in truth; and of letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven: then we shall have turned all His blessings and gifts to our ruin. At our peril, then, are we bound to remember our

Creator in the days of our youth, in order that we may learn what His will is, and obey His commands, so as to be able to render an account of the talents with which we have been intrusted. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." These are the strange and powerful words of the preacher, who says just afterwards, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

We have considered the days of our youth as the days of our blessings: but there is yet another thought still more awakening: for the days of our youth are also the days of our dangers. Great and many are the temptations which youth must undergo. If the young, at their first outset into life, could have all these temptations suddenly placed before their view; if all the hidden enemies of their souls, their peace, and their innocence, were all *at once* set before them: if all their future scenes of blasphemy, lewdness, riot, and intemperance could (as it were by a flash of lightning) be laid open to their sight: if all this could happen, what could be more terrible? Perhaps nothing, except they might also be suffered to look into the next world, and see what the end of all these things is.

It would perhaps, be too overwhelming a sight for the young to see all *at once* the thousand ways in which the world, the flesh, and the devil are labouring to ruin the human soul:—how they would fain court and flatter our foul passions:—how these enemies would overthrow our good resolutions:—how they would endeavour by a thousand cunning tricks to make vice more and more pleasing to our taste; and so persuade us to receive the poison into our very constitution. Now what safeguard can the young take, entering as they do, among such a host of enemies; enemies, too, that go slowly to work, so that we scarcely perceive that we are losing ground, and giving way! We must take some fixed and unchanging rule to walk by, or we are undone: there must be something solid, something unmoveable, a rock (as it were) on which our soul may ride at anchor: we must take something that will not change, nor shift, nor flatter; but will always tell us the truth, the plain, clear, and terrifying truth!

Now what is the rule by which we *naturally* act in the days of our youth? either by no rule at all, or else we are led and governed by custom, by example, by fashion, and by the opinion of those into whose company we are generally thrown. But recollect that this is nothing less than making mankind our God: for whatever you take as your chief rule in life, in the leading governor and director of your conduct, that is your god: it is to you what God should be: it is in God's place; it is this you remember when you ought to remember your Creator: in this you live, and upon this you must depend for strength, and support, and hope, and reward, when you die. What a reed to lean upon! it is sure to snap un-

der *you*, as it has under every one that ever trusted to it. Let us examine this rule; this god that we take unto ourselves to direct us through the dangers of our youth: and what is it? the opinion of the world; that very world, and those very companions, who are the means of drawing us away from our duty? What; are we to take our lessons from the very world that furnishes all these temptations, and gives way to them itself, and riots and indulges in them? are we to take our rule from men, just as willing to yield to temptations as ourselves, and just as ready to find the same excuses? Think then who they are, whose principles and example and applause we should follow instead of God! think who they are—they are the companions of our riots, of our revellings, of our debauches, and of our uncleanness: men of this world, who gave the name of virtue and vice to whatever they please, without first asking counsel of that Almighty One, who is the fountain of all virtue, and the burning enemy of all vice. But this is not all, nor perhaps the worst—the opinions of the world as to virtue and vice are not only ruinously false, but they are as *changeable* as they are false. The world at one time blames a man for the very same thing, which at another time it praises him for. The customs of the world, and the fashionable crimes of men and women, are shifting from day to day and from age to age—take this as one proof out of a thousand. There was once a nation, where theiving was honoured, as proof of skill and cleverness; but in this same nation drunkenness and immodesty, or intemperance of any kind, would have ruined a man's character at once. Now look at the change! In our days, thieving is punished and dishonoured; while men often make a boast of their drunken, immodest and intemperate acts: and the world finds little or no fault: but smiles and passeth on.

How then is a man to be guided by this childish, foolish world: a world that, in six thousand years, has not learned how to guide and rule itself? It calls the same thing virtue at one time, and vice at another; it calls evil good, and good evil; it puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Let a man put this blind guide aside from him, and set the Lord always before him, and “remember his Creator.” The Creator will not shift and change with times and seasons—the fashions and opinions of the world may turn round and round with the world itself: but the Word of God stands unchanged and unchangeable as the God that endureth for ever. *They* have perished and shall perish: but *He* remaineth and shall remain—the fashions and opinions of the world “shall all wax old as doth a garment, and He shall fold them up, and they shall be changed—but He is the same, and His years shall not fail.” Why, one thought upon God, in the very midst of riot and revelling, of oaths and drunkenness, of indecent language and conduct, of revenge, and hatred, and blood: nay, one thought upon God in the midst of the less noisy and less coarse abominations, which are not only allowed, but highly esteemed among men; I say, *one thought* upon

God at such times would produce little less than a revelation. one inward look at God in such a moment would so enlighten a man, that he would at once perceive the holiness, the purity, the love, and beauty of God's Word: and would easily understand the great difference between virtue and vice: the path of duty would be laid open to him: and the still small voice of conscience would sound in his heart, though the laughter of fools, and the loud jeers of the proud should try to drown it. Remember your Creator—let the Word of God be in your heart, and your footsteps will not slide

But the Word of God is not left to our own selves to be recollected or not just as we please—if so, it would long since have been forgotten and lost—but His Word is written: it is entered upon record: it has been sent down upon us from Heaven: it has been practised on earth, and fulfilled and embodied in the Son of God: and it has been sanctified by the blood of Him who gave it. Here must the young remember their Creator, while the world, the flesh and the devil are crowding around them to devour their soul. With this Word in their hands, and the Spirit of the Son of God in their hearts, let the young go through the furnace, or they are lost.

But suppose all this had been neglected, and God altogether forgotten, and that you have, notwithstanding, been permitted by His mercies to arrive at the borders of an unholy old age, how will you *then* set about remembering your Creator? Are the cold and evil days of age, and sickness, and weakness, the proper time to do the work of youth and health, and strength? is it a time for rousing, and stirring up, and quickening our natural powers, just when Providence has ordered them to be left to rest and to be quiet, and to die? is it a time to be converted and to become as a little child, and to begin life anew, and to grow in grace, and to rejoice as a giant to run your course, just as you are dropping into the grave? What an hour to be obliged to undo all that you have done; to be obliged to turn out the whole load of filthy things that have been so long gathering in your mind, and to purify a foul and corrupted memory from all the vile thoughts and recollections that have filled your heart; that heart, which should have been occupied in thinking upon, and remembering your Creator! And then, too, when you shall come to teach this rule to your children, how will you do it? Those words, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," how will you speak them to your child? Will you speak them with the kind but firm voice of a father; of one who is to them in the place of God upon earth? or will you not rather hang your head, and drop your grey hairs in shame before the son that should honour and respect you? you will blush to look your child in the face, when you read him a lesson which you yourself never practised, and your lips will quiver, and your tongue will falter, when you say to him, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."

And yet are we to say that there is no hope for you? God forbid! If there were no hope for those who have forgotten their Creator, which of us could lift his eyes to heaven? You, and all the world, and he too who is now warning you, every day, every hour have forgotten the Creator. Those awful blessings that He has given us, we have used for our sport and amusement, and forgotten from whom they came. We have rushed into the dangers and temptations of life, with nothing to guide us but the stirrings of an evil nature, or the opinion of an evil and foolish world. Those who feel this in the depths of their hearts, and the awful state to which such rashness has brought them, will know how to value the great and glorious Atonement that has been made for them upon the Cross. It will be music to their ears, to be told that to those who have forgotten their Creator, it is yet said, "Remember your Redeemer!"—remember Him and Live!—open wide your memory and your heart to this blessed One, and let the King of Glory come in! Just think, whom you will remember instead of Him? who is there that shall fill his place, and sit upon the seat of your memory, that will return you faithfully love for love, and thought for thought? Will the object that is dearest to you upon earth do this? The heart of that very being may at this moment be cold and faithless! That heart will certainly be *one day* cold in the forgetful grave, and will not be able to remember you. But there is not one pure thought, one holy recollection that struggles to rise to that generous Redeemer which He will suffer to fall to the ground. No. He will receive it kindly: repay it richly. He will return it from on high with a rain of blessings upon your head. Go and remember Him who thought of you before you had the power of thinking either of Him or of yourself; who made you young and lusty as an eagle, and only a little lower than the angels, crowning you with majesty and honour; who remembered you when you had forgotten Him and yourself; and forgotten all that becometh a creature whom his Creator has marked out for immortality. He remembered you when He bowed His head upon the cross; and He is willing (if you will) to confess you before the Father and His holy Angels: even before the Creator whom you had forgotten! Go and think of Him! for at this instant He is thinking of every one of us. *Amen.*

IT is a fearful thing to be counted *as dead* before Him who is "the God, not of the dead, but of the living!" (*Matt. xxii. 32.*) Think what it is to continue in a state which, while it lasts, is as opposite to all hopes of eternal bliss, as death is opposite to life!—To wear out our days in a fatal lethargy, from which we may finally be awakened only by the sting of that worm which dieth not. To all, who, full of hope and animation, are bounding forward in the career of life, those scriptural figures will appear, perhaps, extravagant and strange, which describe the want of active religious principle as no better than a state of heavy and death-like slumber. Youth, and prosperity, and health, are apt to be incredulous even of inspiration itself, when it tells them, that a fervid pursuit of the joys and interests of this world can ever be duly described as a suspension of life, as a perilous interruption of the great purposes of our existence. And yet the time must infallibly arrive, when the enchantment which surrounds them will dissolve, and leave them in the midst of comfortless and appalling realities. They will then see, perhaps when it is too late, that they who are animated by their passions, and by their passions only, exist but in a land of dreams and shadows, environed by apparitions of treacherous delight, which swept them to the wide gate, and the broad and beaten way, that leadeth to eternal death. If, to be awake, imply a full possession of those faculties which distinguish an accountable being, then are the mere votaries of the world in a profound and alarming slumber, differing from death only by the false and fleeting visions by which it is haunted. If they only can be said to be alive, who are animated by principles conformable to the destinies of an immortal spirit, then are they, who "live in pleasure, *dead while they live.*" (*1 Tim. v. 6.*) If it be written, that "man shall live, not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD," (*Matt. iv. 4.*) what a mockery of life must be the existence of those, who seek for health and fulness in the meat which perisheth, and who know not the virtues of that bread which was sent down from heaven (*John vi. 50, 51*) and giveth life unto mankind! Every power and faculty belonging to us may be alive to the pursuit of this scene, the fashion of which passeth away; but if they are not alive to the service of that ETERNAL LORD, who demands our heart, and soul and strength; if they are not at once nourished and consecrated by the growth of that wisdom which increased with the human growth of our blessed SAVIOUR, and exalted Him in the favour of God and man; we truly may be said to *abide in death*; a stupefying spell is upon us, which shuts out all the previous influences of heaven, and leaves us in the deadly bondage of *flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*—C. W. Le Bas.

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DEGREES OF BLISS

IN

HEAVEN.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.—2 Peter chap. 1. ver. 11.

It is the great concern of every man, in the first place, to get the saving grace of God, and having gotten it, to proceed and increase in it; earnestly to reach after a principle of the divine life within himself, and having attained it, to cherish and improve it; to endeavour of evil (as we are all naturally and antecedently to the divine grace) to become truly good, and then every day to grow better; first to be sincere disciples of the Holy JESUS, and then to aspire, study and labour hard, to become great proficient in his divine school. This latter duty St. Peter earnestly and vehemently presseth on the converted Jews of the dispersion, to whom he writes, and in them upon all of us, in the verses preceding my text; where he exhorts them in the most emphatical expressions to an holy covetousness after spiritual riches, and to accumulate and heap up heavenly treasures with as much greediness, as the men of this world do their gold and silver: To add one grace to another, and one degree of each grace upon another, and to abound in virtue and good works. For after he had (ver. 4) reminded them of the great design of christianity, which is to make men partakers of the Divine Nature, by rescuing them from the corruption that is in the world through lust, *i. e.* To convert men from their evil and wicked courses, and to bring them to a state of grace and regeneration; and charitably supposing this to be already done in them, he proceeds to shew them their further duty, (ver. 5, 6, 7, 8.) "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance

patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if all these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST." As if he had said: You have now, God be thanked, escaped the pollutions of the world, and are truly, I hope, converted to christianity, and in baptism have been regenerated by the HOLY GHOST; (that he means by being made partakers of the Divine Nature.) This indeed is a very great achievement, and an invaluable mercy of God, vouchsafed to you; yet I beseech you, rest not here; but besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, &c. So that the sum of his discourse is to press them first to truth in grace, and then to growth in grace; to acquire the divine virtues reckoned up by him, and then to abound in them. And to persuade them to this abounding in grace and virtue, he useth a powerful motive and argument in the words of the text: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST." As if he had said, If you thus abound in grace, you shall abound in glory; you shall not only come to heaven, or get just within the gate of that glorious region, (and yet happy is he that can arrive to be but a door-keeper in the house of his heavenly Father) but you shall have an *abundant* entrance into it; you shall go very far, and attain a higher pitch and degree of glory there. This is the plain and obvious sense of the words.

Not to spend time needlessly, or to trouble you with any further preface, the text thus briefly explained and considered, with relation to the context, readily and of itself offers to us this proposition.

There shall be degrees of bliss and glory in CHRIST'S heavenly kingdom; and the more we abound in grace and good works here, the more abundant shall our reward be hereafter.

This proposition I intend, with the divine assistance, for the theme and subject of my following discourse.

That this is no nice or fruitless speculation, fitted only to exercise the wits of men, or to entertain their curiosity, but a branch of that 'truth which is according to godliness,' as the apostle Paul expresseth it, (*Tit. i. ver. 1.*) that is, a doctrine tending to the advancement and furtherance of piety and virtue amongst men, will be soon evident to any man, that with any degree of serious attention shall consider it.

If this be a truth, it must needs be a useful one, and of concernment to us. And that it is so, will further appear to all, from those other texts of scripture, wherein it is not only plainly taught, but also urged as a motive to a more fruitful piety, which shall be produced in the sequel of my discourse; wherein I shall prescribe to myself this plain and easy method.

First, I shall further prove the proposition by other clear and express texts of scripture, and by reasons and arguments grounded on scripture, and by the consent of the Catholic Church, inter-

preting the scripture to the same sense. In the next place, I shall endeavour to answer the principal objections that are usually made against this truth. *Lastly*, I shall conclude with a brief application of the whole discourse.

First, For the fuller demonstration of the point, let us in the first place hear what the HOLY GHOST hath in other places of scripture delivered concerning it. And here, out of a great abundance of texts, that might be alledged, I shall make use only of such, as speak more plainly and evidently to our purpose.

Such is that text in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; where St. Peter asking what reward he and the rest of the apostles should have, that had forsaken their all in this world to follow CHRIST and be his disciples, (*ver. 27.*) our SAVIOUR thus answers, (*ver. 28.*) "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So I read the text. For it is evident enough, our translators have mispointed it, referring the words in the regeneration, to that which went before, thus: "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration;" whereas they should be joined to the following words, thus: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory," &c. In the regeneration; what is that? Not in baptism, nor in the regeneration or renewing of the spirit, as some have fancied; for neither of these significations will make good sense in this place; but in the resurrection, which will be indeed a Regeneration, or second generation of men to life, after that life which they had in their first generation was extinguished. Which second generation, or production of men to life, is more properly the work of GOD, as being effected solely by His divine power, without the concurrence of any second causes; whereas in our first generation into the world our parents were instruments. Hence those words of the psalmist concerning CHRIST, (*Psal. ii.*) "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," are said by St. Paul to be then fulfilled in him, when GOD raised him from the dead, (*Acts xiii. ver. 32, 33.*) "The promise which was made unto the fathers, GOD hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up JESUS again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And hence also, all the godly are said at the resurrection to become the children of GOD, upon the very account of their being then raised by GOD to a blessed immortal life, (*Luke xx. ver. 36.*) "They are called the children of GOD, being the children of the resurrection."

Well then! In or at the regeneration, or resurrection, when CHRIST shall sit in the throne of his glory, as the Judge of men and angels, it is promised to the twelve apostles, that they also should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Concerning the full sense of which words, though there

is some dispute, yet this is generally agreed among interpreters, and it is most evident from the context, that they express some singular and eminent glory, which the apostles should receive in the world to come, as the reward of their singular and eminent self-denial, in devoting themselves to CHRIST's gospel. And though every saint shall in his degree be enthroned in the heavenly glory; yet here are twelve thrones of judicature and pre-eminence, answering to the twelve apostles then in being. Indeed Judas, one of the twelve, afterward fell from his office, and so lost his throne too. But this was through his own default, and our blessed LORD failed not in his promise. But the cursed traitor, by his horrid violation of the condition of it, forfeited his right therein. There being twelve apostles at that time, to whom our SAVIOUR spake these words, he saith they should sit upon twelve thrones; as if Judas also should have his throne to sit on; not that he thought the wretch should ever attain that throne, (for he knew him from the beginning to be a devil) but because, if Judas had continued in the faithful discharge of his office, as the other apostles did, he should have had his throne, as the other apostles had theirs, as *St. Chrysostom* well observes; for CHRIST speaks of his apostles, according to their present righteousness, and not so much of their persons, as of their state and office.

As if he should have said, the office of apostles, as it is an office of the highest service, labour, and difficulty, so it hath the highest reward propounded to it; insomuch that they who well perform it, shall be advanced to the most eminent thrones of glory in the life to come, and be nearest to myself the King of Glory. For, to *sit upon thrones, judging* (or governing, or being over) *the twelve tribes of Israel*, is a metaphorical expression, taken from the ancient state of the kingdom of Israel, in which the princes, or heads of the tribes came nearest in dignity to the king's majesty, and in the public assemblies sat next to the royal throne in chairs of state made of ivory. So that it is manifest, CHRIST here promiseth his disciples an eminent degree of glory and dignity in his heavenly kingdom. And hence the language is different, which our SAVIOUR useth, concerning the reward of those who should afterwards imitate the apostles, and follow them in their active and passive virtue, though at a very humble distance. For of those in the next verse he saith, that they should "receive an hundred fold," (a very ample and liberal reward of their self-denial, in whatsoever instance expressed) "and inherit everlasting life;" but he doth not say, as of the apostles, that they shall "sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The next place we shall cite, will give light to the former, and speaks more clearly to our present purpose. It is to be found in the twentieth chapter of the same gospel of St. Matthew, where we read (*ver.* 20, 21.) that the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, came with her two sons to CHRIST with this petition, "Grant that these two sons may sit, the one on thy right

hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." She had heard from her sons, that the apostles in general had a promise of a more eminent dignity in CHRIST's kingdom, like that of the princes or heads of the tribes in the kingdom of Israel, as hath been already noted. But she knew, that even among the apostles themselves there would be degrees of dignity; as in the ancient kingdom of Israel; the two first places belonged to the princes of the tribes of Judah and Joseph; these two first places therefore she asks for her two sons in the kingdom of CHRIST. To sit at the right hand of a king, according to the Eastern custom, is the very next place of dignity to the king himself. Hence Solomon, sitting on his royal throne, commanded his mother to be set on his right hand, (*1 Kings ii. ver. 19.*) Consequently the third place of dignity in the kingdom is described by sitting at the king's left hand; for accordingly as any man was greater in the kingdom, so in the public assemblies he sat nearer to the king. To this petition of Salome, our blessed LORD having first by the way given a check to her vanity, and her erroneous opinion about his kingdom, at length, (*ver. 23.*) he thus more directly answers, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." CHRIST speaks as man in the state of humiliation, referring all things of his kingdom (according to his manner,) to his Father, from whom he received it. But as to our present purpose: Our SAVIOUR denies not that there shall be a right hand and a left hand place, as a first and second place of dignity, and consequently a third place, and so downwards, in his heavenly kingdom, yea, he plainly asserts, that there shall be such degrees of honour therein; but he only teacheth, that those places and degrees shall be distributed, according to the pleasure of his Father, who best knows who are fittest for them; and that this pleasure of GOD was not yet to be made known, either to Salome and her sons, or to any of the sons of men; but the discovery of it to be reserved to the revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD at the last day. So that this text very manifestly confirms the proposition; especially if we add the words of our SAVIOUR presently afterwards in the same chapter, spoken upon the same occasion, (*ver. 26, 27.*) "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." For hence St. Jerom thus argues against Jovinian, "If we shall be equal in heaven, we in vain humble ourselves here, that we may be greater there." Indeed our SAVIOUR in these words most plainly acknowledgeth, that there shall be some greater, some lesser, some first or chief, some inferior in his heavenly kingdom; and he shows that the only way to attain a pre-eminence hereafter, is by the lowest humility here, and by condescending to the meanest for their spiritual good and advantage.

The same doctrine is plainly taught us (whatever some learned men have fancied to the contrary) from the very scope of the para-

ble of our SAVIOUR, (*Luke xix.*) of the ten servants, who received of their lord, being to go into a far country, each of them a pound, to trade with till his return. At which time he that had increased his pound to ten pounds, was made "ruler over ten cities," (*ver.* 16, 17.) and he that gained but five pounds was made "ruler over five cities," (*ver.* 18, 19.) the lord's reward bearing proportion to the several improvements made by his servants.

To the same sense and purpose very many of the ancient fathers, and the most learned modern interpreters, generally expound those words of our SAVIOUR, (*John xiv. ver.* 2.) "In my Father's house are many mansions." The multitude of mansions in heaven seems hardly intelligible, without admitting a difference of degrees in the heavenly glory. For if all the saints should be placed in one and the same degree or station of bliss, they would have all one and the same mansion in heaven; but in our heavenly Father's house there are many mansions, some higher, some lower, according to the measure of proficiency in virtue, which men have attained to in this life. So *Clemens Alexandrinus*, "There are with the LORD many rewards and mansions, according to the proportion of men's lives." So also *Tertullian*, "How are there many mansions with the Father, but according to the variety of merits?" that is, (in the language of those writers) the good works of men. So the fathers of the church afterward alleged this text against *Jovinian*, who held a parity of rewards in the life to come.

Another common proof of this doctrine is taken out of the first epistle to the Corinthians, (*chap. xv. ver.* 41, 42.) "There is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory: So also is the resurrection of the dead." It is true, in the context of this place, the manifest scope and intent of the apostle is to show the vast difference between those bodies of ours that die and turn to corruption and the glorious bodies we shall receive at the resurrection. But yet, in these words it seems plain, that the apostle riseth higher, and by the way sets forth the disparity that there will be at the resurrection, even among the glorified bodies of the saints; some shining with brighter, some with lesser rays of glory: As among the heavenly lights, some are more glorious than others. As if he should have said, there is a difference, not only between the terrestrial and celestial bodies, but even the celestial bodies differ among themselves; the sun being the brightest of the heavenly lights, the moon in its appearance to us the next to it; and among the stars, some being more bright and conspicuous than others. So in the resurrection, not only the glorified bodies of the saints shall differ from their corruptible bodies they had here, but also among those glorified bodies themselves, there shall be degrees of glory.

Unless we thus expound the apostle, it will be hard to give a tolerable account of his discourse in this place. For we must otherwise suppose that he compares those bodies that are sown in cor-

ruption, the rotten stinking carcasses of men, to some of the glorious heavenly lights, though of a lesser magnitude ; than which comparison, what can be more incongruous or absurd ? Hence *Tertulian* in the place, in part already cited, thus understands the text,

How are there *many mansions with the Father*, unless it be according to the variety of men's good works ? How also shall one star differ from another star in glory, but according to the diversity of rays or beams of light ?" And as the greatest, so the best part of modern interpreters, acknowledge this exposition of the apostle's words to be true and genuine, yea and absolutely necessary.

But our last text of scripture will put the matter out of all doubt ; which we read, (2 *Cor.* ix. ver. 6.) " But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." It is certain, and confessed by all, that the design of the apostle in this place, is to excite and stir up the Corinthians to a liberal charity towards their distressed brethren, and that his chief argument is contained in these words. It is confessed also, that in these words, to sow, signifies to do good works, particularly works of charity ; to reap, to receive the reward, the future eternal reward of such works. Indeed the apostle other-where plainly interprets himself to this sense ; viz. (*Gal.* vi. ver. 8.) " He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Where also the latter words manifestly respect in the first place works of charity and beneficence, particularly such as are exercised towards our spiritual teachers, as appears from verse 6. " Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." Now our apostle, in the place alledged out of his epistle to the Corinthians, expressly asserts, that as our sowing is more sparing or more liberal, so shall our reaping be also ; the greater charity exercised by us in this world, the greater felicity and happiness attends us in the world to come. And so on the contrary, the thinner our seeds of charity are sown here, the lesser will be our harvest of glory hereafter. Nothing can be more express to our purpose than this testimony, and therefore I shall seek after no other, or farther proofs from scripture, of the proposition I have undertaken to demonstrate.

But to these direct testimonies of scripture, I shall only add, by way of overplus, one or two reasons, or arguments grounded on scripture.

1.—It is certain, that amongst the damned there will be an inequality of punishments, some suffering lesser, other greater degrees of torment ; therefore it is highly reasonable to think, that in the opposite state of the blessed, there will be also a disparity of rewards. The antecedent is determined, and beyond all contradiction asserted by our SAVIOUR himself. For speaking of the town or city that shall reject the gospel preached to them by the

apostles, he tells us, that "it shall be *more tolerable* for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city," (*Matth. x. ver. 15.*) And in the next chapter he assures us, that "it shall be *more tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida," who had heard his doctrine and seen his miracles, and would be converted by neither of them; and that "it shall be *more tolerable* for the land of Sodom, than for Capernaum," upon the same account, (*Matth. xi. ver. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.*) And most express are his words, (*Luke xii. ver. 47, &c.*) "And that servant which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes: But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

2.—There are degrees of honour and glory among the angels in heaven, and though they are all of them glorious creatures, yet among them some are higher, some inferior in dignity, some are greater, others lesser; therefore we have reason to conclude, that there will be an order and gradation among the blessed saints of heaven likewise. For we are sure, that in the future state we shall be like unto the angels; and why not in this? Seeing in the angelical polity there are divers orders, ranks and degrees, can we imagine that the communion of the saints in heaven shall be a levelled society? This is utterly incredible. Now the antecedent here again is most evident from scripture; and though we dare not intrude ourselves into the things we have not seen, yet that there are orders and degrees among the blessed angels, we may with all assurance affirm, having the plainest warrant of the holy text for the assertion. For we often read in scripture, not only of angels, but also of archangels, *i. e.* chief angels that have a pre-eminence above the rest. This is so known and confessed by every man, that we need not cite the texts wherein mention is made of them.

To these reasons we may add the consent of the Catholic Church in this question. It is certain, that it was ever held in the primitive church as an undoubted truth, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come; and that this was never called into question, until the conceited opinionist Jovinian, (among his other paradoxes,) ventured to broach the contrary doctrine. But how he was entertained for this, by the most eminent doctors of the church of his age, St. Jerom, St. Austin, and others, we very well know. His obstinacy in this and other erroneous tenets, against the plainest evidence of scripture and reason, hath placed him in the black catalogue of heretics.

And it is pity that amongst the reformed foreign divines, there should be any found, that should dare to patronize so exploded an error; especially if we consider the very weak arguments by

which they endeavour to justify their dissent from the Catholic Church. To the brief examination of which arguments, we are in the next place to proceed.

1.—They say they cannot conceive how this doctrine can be maintained, without admitting with the Papists the merit of good works. For, if as our labour is greater or lesser in God's service here, our reward shall be greater or lesser in the life to come; then there is a proportion observed between our labour or work, and the reward. And this necessarily infers the merit of our work of labour.

I answer, that this objection is founded on a plain mistake of the doctrine of scripture, which we defend. For when we say with the holy scriptures, that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour," we do not mean that there will be an exact proportion between a man's labour and his reward; for it is certain that the highest degree of grace, can never equal the lowest degree of glory, nor can the best of saints by all that he can do, deserve so much as to be a door-keeper in the house of his heavenly Father: But the proportion here, is between the work and reward of one good man, compared with the work and reward of another; and in this comparison the proportion is exact.

A very learned father of our church* explains this by an apposite similitude, which I shall give you, as near as may be in his own words translated. "Suppose, saith he, three husbandmen to be employed in cultivating or dressing the field of some prince, one for one day, only, another for three days, the third for six days. Now if the prince out of his royal bounty shall give to the first a thousand talents, to the second three thousand talents, to the third six thousand; it is evident that the reward is measured out to each of these, according to the different measure of their labour: but yet it were ridiculous for a man hence to conclude, that the labour of him that wrought six days, deserved six thousand talents, yea or so much as six talents, yea or so much as one talent, and so in the rest. After the same manner are we to conceive of the divine remuneration. For although we affirm, that God measures out to every man a different degree of glory, according to the different measure of his labour, yet it doth not follow from hence, that between the work and reward of one and the same man, there is an equality of proportion; but only that between the different works and rewards of different men, there is an equality of proportionality. If therefore the work of any man, be compared with the reward of the same man, viz. eternal life, we may presently discern an infinite inequality between them; but if the works of different men, and the rewards of different men be compared, according to the degrees of eminence in the same life eternal, there will appear an accurate proportionality. And this is to reward every man according to his own labour."

* Bishop Pavenant.

I need not say any more in answer to this argument, and shall therefore pass to the next.

2.—They thus argue. The future glory of the saints, is the purchase of CHRIST's righteousness, which is alike imputed to all true believers, and they have an equal share therein, and consequently they shall share equally in the future glory.

I answer, the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of CHRIST, as it hath been too commonly taught and understood, hath been a fruitful mother of many pernicious and dangerous errors in divinity. In this objection, it is supposed, that the righteousness of CHRIST is so imputed to every believer, that it becomes *formally* his righteousness, and that upon the sole account thereof he hath a right to the future glory. And if this were true, if CHRIST's righteousness were thus ours, that righteousness being the most perfect righteousness, nothing less could answer it than the highest reward in heaven; and so indeed it would necessarily follow, that the future glory of all the saints should be alike and equal. But this supposition hath no foundation in scripture, yea it is plainly false. And that it is so, if we had no other argument, the very doctrine we are now upon were sufficient to evince. We have proved by very plain texts of scripture, that there will be a disparity of rewards in the life to come, according to the disparity of men's graces and good works in this life; and from hence we may safely conclude, that the doctrine of those who teach that the perfect righteousness of CHRIST is *formally* the righteousness of every believer, and that thereupon he hath a right to the highest reward in heaven, is certainly false. Nay indeed, if that doctrine of theirs were true, a consequence would follow, which cannot be uttered without trembling, that every saint shall be equal to CHRIST in glory; CHRIST's righteousness being his, and so he having a right to whatsoever that righteousness deserved.

But to answer more directly to the objection, there is nothing more certain, than that the future glory of the saints, is the purchase of CHRIST's righteousness. But how? By the meritorious obedience of CHRIST in his life and death, a covenant of grace, mercy and life eternal was procured, ratified and established between God and the sinful sons of men; the condition of this covenant is "faith working by love," or a faith fruitful of good works; and there is also sufficient grace promised to all that shall heartily seek it for the performance of that condition. It is from this covenant of infinite mercy in CHRIST JESUS alone, that our imperfect good works have any ordination to so excellent a reward, as the future glory; and it is the mercy, the rich mercy, the royal bounty and liberality of God, expressed in the same covenant, that assigns to greater degrees of grace here, greater degrees of glory hereafter. This is the plain truth. But to be short, and to show the perfect sophistry of this objection, I ask the objectors, whether they do not acknowledge that the present grace of the saints in this life is as well the purchase of CHRIST's righteousness as their future

glory? They must, they will, they do confess it. Now then, according to their argument it will follow, that all the saints have equal degrees of grace in this life, because they have an equal share in the righteousness of CHRIST, by which that grace was purchased; than which assertion, nothing can be more notoriously false. This their argument therefore is a manifest fallacy.

Their last objection is taken from the parable of our SAVIOUR, (*Matth. xx. ver. 1, &c.*) Where the kingdom of heaven, that is, the church of God, is compared to a vineyard, the master whereof went out in the morning to hire labourers, and agreed with them for a penny a day. Three hours after, or at the third hour, he went out and hired more; and so again at the sixth and ninth hours; yea at the eleventh hour he did likewise. And when they came all to receive their wages, he gave the last he had hired, as much as he had agreed for with the first, viz. every one a penny, neither more nor less. Whence they infer that the future reward, signified by this penny; shall not be proportioned according to the difference of men's works, but be one and the same to all.

I answer, this parable belongs not at all to the matter in question; seeing the scope of it is to justify God's proceedings, in the dispensation of his grace towards the church of the Jews, and that of the Gentiles; the latter of which was not called, till a long time after the former; and though being so much junior to it, yet was made its equal in the benefits and blessings of God's gracious covenant. The Jews were first hired into the vineyard betimes in the morning, in the more early ages of the world, in the days of Abraham, with whom and his posterity, God made a special covenant of grace and mercy; and in the after ages (which seem to be signified in the parable, by the third, and sixth and ninth hours) at such times as the true religion was in danger to fail among them, He by extraordinary means and instruments, raised and restored it again; as in the days of Moses, and Elias, and after the captivity of Babylon. But the Gentiles were not called into the vineyard, till the day was far spent, in the last time and dispensation; (undoubtedly signified in the parable by the eleventh hour;) and yet these, by the goodness of their heavenly master, are admitted to the same privileges with the Israelites, and they receive the same reward which was promised to the Jews, with whom the covenant was first made, and who bore the heat of the day, whilst the others stood idle.

This admission of idolatrous Gentiles, upon their conversion to the faith of CHRIST, unto equal privileges with the Jews, was a great offence to them, and an occasion of hardening many of them in their unbelief, and rejection of CHRIST's gospel. They would rather quit, than share in the benefits of the gospel, with the Gentiles whom they so much despised and hated, as if they scorned to go to heaven in their company. This discontent of the Jews at the gracious dispensation of God towards the Gentiles, by the gospel of CHRIST in the latter ages, is doubtless signified in the para-

ble by the murmuring of those servants, that were first hired into the vineyard, against the equal retribution given to those servants that were hired last of all, mentioned *verses* 11 and 12. And now what is all this to the purpose of the objectors?

In a word, it may seem strange that any man should fetch a proof out of this chapter for a parity of rewards in the life to come, and that from a parabolical discourse delivered therein, and that manifestly designed to a quite different purpose; when in the very same chapter, (*ver.* 23, 26, 27.) our SAVIOUR plainly teacheth the contrary doctrine, as I have undeniably evinced.

The objections against this truth, being thus cleared, I shall add only one caution, necessary to prevent the misunderstanding of it, viz. that though there shall be different degrees of glory in the life to come; yet to every saint his own degree shall be a satisfactory beatitude.

To receive those rivers of pleasure, that flow from the right hand of God, there will be many vessels (if I may use the common similitude) of different sizes and capacities, some greater, some lesser, but all of them shall be filled. This different, but in every one satisfactory perception of the future heavenly bliss, seems to have been typified and represented by the Israelites gathering of manna (that food of heaven) in the wilderness; of which we read (*Exod.* xvi. *ver.* 18.) that "he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his own eating." To explain this as far as we are able, it is to be observed, that although while we are in this state of proficiency and running our race, it be not only lawful, but a laudable ambition and emulation in us, to strive to outstrip and excel each other in virtue, and so to gain the richer prize; yet when our race is finished and the great Judge of it hath given his award, and passed the decisive sentence, we must not, we shall not contend, but fully acquiesce and rest therein. And then the servant, who having increased his pound, but to five more, shall hear his lord pronouncing, "well done thou good servant, be thou ruler over five cities;" he, I say, shall be as well pleased and satisfied as the other servant, who having made a double improvement, shall receive a proportionable reward, and have "authority over ten cities."

Among the blessed in heaven there shall be no discontent or repining, no pride or disdain, no grudging or envy; but there shall be all contentment, all joy, all thankfulness, all love. They that are seated in the higher mansions of glory, shall not look down with contempt on those that are beneath them; nor shall these lift up an envious eye towards the other; but they shall perfectly love and delight in each other: and by an inexpressible union of sublimated charity, each shall make what the other enjoys his own, and all together shall make up in different notes, one sweet harmonious concert in the praises of God, the fountain of their bliss. To this purpose is the saying of *St. Austin*, (on *John* xiv. *ver.* 2.)

speaking of the different rewards of the blessed in heaven: "It comes to pass through charity, that what each hath is common to all; for thus every man hath it also in himself, when he loves and rejoiceth in, and so enjoys in another, what himself hath not."

It is hard indeed for us mortals, whilst we dwell in these houses of clay, and are incumbered with the sinful inclinations and passions of this flesh, to conceive of this, and to comprehend the divine power of exalted love. But let us consider, why may not that be among the saints hereafter, which we are sure is among the holy angels now? In that celestial hierarchy, archangels and angels, cherubims and seraphims, and thrones, and the lower orders of those blessed spirits, disagree not among themselves, though they differ from one another in honour and dignity; but on the contrary, they perfectly love and delight in each other, and all in their God. And in their several stations, they readily and cheerfully execute the will and pleasure of their great Lord and Master, whose ministers they are; and all together make one family of love and peace, of joy and order, and one harmonious choir, in perfect concert, and with ravishing melody, sounding forth the praises of their heavenly King. And thus it shall be with the saints after the resurrection, when they shall be made like unto the angels, that is, when they shall enjoy the same life immortal which the angels do, and be joined to them, and be incorporated into their blessed society.

And now, *lastly*, to apply this whole discourse: Let us, by what hath been said, be excited and stirred up to a diligent, earnest, and zealous pursuit after an increase of virtue, and a greater proficiency in the ways of righteousness and holiness. Let us shun no labour that comes in our way, and is within our reach and compass, whereby we may glorify God, and do good to others; for we see, the more grace the more glory; and the greater and more industrious our labour in God's service hath been in this life, the greater and more copious, and abundant shall our reward be in the life to come. We cannot be truly righteous overmuch, as the slothful world would persuade us, nor can there be any excess or superfluity in virtue, or in the habits and exercises of real piety and charity. How great soever our labour be in the business of religion, none of it shall be lost labour, or "in vain in the Lord." Every degree of grace which we advance to here, shall raise us a degree higher in the future glory. And all the good works that ever we do, shall be recorded in the faithful register of the Divine Omniscience and not one of them shall be forgotten, or miss of its reward. O! that this consideration might often, and very deeply enter our thoughts! How would a vigorous sense of this truth awaken and rouse us out of our remissness and negligence in religion, that too often seizeth on us? How would this inspirit and animate us to generous attempts even of heroic virtue, which in this degenerate age are derided, as vain romantic enterprizes? How often, at least would this thought call us from our idle soli-

tude, or unprofitable society, to our prayers and devotions? How many precious hours of our time would it rescue and redeem, from being mispent and lost in vanity and folly? How readily should we embrace, yea, how studiously should we seek after the opportunities of doing good? For indeed every such opportunity is an advantage offered us by the good providence of God, farther to enrich our souls, and to add to our heavenly store and treasure, the only true treasure, that shall never fail or be taken from us.

In a word, therefore, let us in the first place, (as I said in the beginning of this discourse) take care to secure our being in a state of grace; for 'it is a folly for him, that is not yet sure of life, to contend for honour.' And having done this, let us not rest here, but advance more and more in that blessed state, and go on to perfection.

I conclude with the words of St. Peter in the close of this epistle, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; to Him be glory now and forever Amen."

Qualifications for higher Degrees of Happiness.

HAVING considered the grounds of the doctrine that there will be different degrees of happiness and glory in the life to come, let us now consider the QUALIFICATIONS requisite for those, who would attain the highest degrees of honour in the Messiah's kingdom.

And this consideration is the more deserving of our regard, and the more indispensable for every Christian, because, whilst the qualifications requisite for attaining the most eminent honours are in the most eminent degree requisite for those, who aspire to sit at the right hand and at the left of the SAVIOUR in his kingdom, the diligent pursuit and the acquisition of the *same qualifications* though in an inferior and less perfect degree, are necessary for those also, who will be admitted to fill the lowest stations in his kingdom. The holy city must be approached by the way of holiness. Superior degrees of excellence will be advanced, so we may humbly believe, through the merits of the Redeemer, to superior degrees of the Divine favour, and will occupy a pre-eminent station in the "many mansions of his Father's house." (*John* xiv. 2.) But the highway to it is one which the unclean shall not pass over; and "there shall in no wise enter into the city any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (*Rev.* xxi. 27.)

With respect then to the *qualifications* in question, in a *general* way, higher degrees of happiness are the consequence of the most diligent, laborious, arduous, and unwearied *efforts* in the service of GOD; of the most intense *thirst* after the promised inheritance of glory; of the most patient *perseverance* and the most abundant *fruitfulness* in well doing; of the greatest *sacrifices* for CHRIST's sake.

But for a fuller exposition of the subject, let us again advert to our LORD's dialogue with the sons of Zebedee. For therein our attention is directed to the *nature* of the *qualifications* requisite for those disciples of CHRIST, who desire to be admitted into the SAVIOUR's future kingdom, and especially for those who aspire to stations of pre-eminence in that kingdom, by his question addressed to the two brethren, whose request has been made the foundation of our present reflections. "JESUS answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." Their view had been limited to the wished-for object, instead of being extended to the qualifying means. To these latter, therefore, their thoughts were to be drawn by the ensuing inquiry, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The "cup" of the SAVIOUR, as we have already had occasion to notice, was that *bitter cup of suffering* which he was about to drink for man's salvation in compliance with the awful dispensation of the divine will: and the SAVIOUR's "baptism" was that *agonizing sacrifice*, wherein he was soon to be baptized in his own blood. And the question in its *literal* and *primary* bearing points to those losses and privations, to those mortifications and distresses, to which his first followers were exposed: when they were called on to "forsake houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for his sake and the gospel's;" (*Mark* x. 29,)—or, as elsewhere expressed, "for the kingdom of God's sake:" (*Luke* xviii. 29;)—and when, for his sake also and the gospel's, they were called on to suffer persecution under its various forms of false accusations and injurious revilings, of stripes, and bonds, and imprisonment, and banishment, and finally of a violent and cruel death. These are the persons, to whom the language of our SAVIOUR appears to point *literally* in the first place; and to indicate "the *martyrs of JESUS*," (*Rev.* xvii. 6,) "them that were slain for the word of GOD, and for the testimony which they held," (*Rev.* vi. 9,) who "loved not their lives unto the death," (*Rev.* xii. 11,) but who "came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," (*Rev.* vii. 14,) as entitled to peculiar distinction "before the throne of GOD."

But the qualification may be regarded perhaps as of a *less limited extent*, and may be understood to comprehend those disciples of CHRIST also, who in after ages, for the sake of CHRIST and his gospel, and of the kingdom of CHRIST, should suffer *persecution*.

whether such persecution might lead to the actual laying down of their lives in defence of the Christian verity ; or might stop short of the last extremity of suffering, and thus not render necessary a "resistance unto blood." (*Heb. xii. 4.*)

Or, again, in more peaceable times of the gospel, the conformity to the SAVIOUR, intimated by the figurative expressions of the question, may probably be accomplished, not so much by a resolute and constant endurance of the perils of persecution, as by a patient, composed, and devout *submission* to those *sufferings*, which are more usually incidental to our nature and to our present state of existence.

Or, again, it may be the will of God for such conformity to be manifested, less by the patient endurance of extraordinary persecutions, or even by that of any intense degree of affliction, than by a strict *imitation* of the *example* of holiness which CHRIST has left us, in the general course of our Christian duty, and in a punctual following of his steps, notwithstanding the temptations of our spiritual enemies, through the ordinary offices of a "sober, righteous, and godly life," (*Til. ii. 12.*) and with the meekness and humility of "little children." (*Matt. xvii. 4.*)

Thus much indeed may be accounted certain, that an endeavour to "be conformed to the image of the SON OF GOD" (*Rom. viii. 29*) through this season of discipline and probation, in such respects and to such a degree, as the state of life in which it hath pleased God to place us shall render practicable, is a necessary qualification for all those his disciples, who desire to be admitted to a participation of his glory. And the more completely the Christian can succeed by God's grace, in becoming "conformed to the image of his Son," by submitting with devout resignation to severer trials, if in the good pleasure of God severer trials await him ; or, if not, by "patient continuance in well-doing," unterrified by the dangers, and unseduced by the allurements of the world ; the more properly may he be said to "drink of the cup of which his SAVIOUR drank, and to be baptized with the baptism which his SAVIOUR was baptized with :—" and the more lively hope may he reasonably cherish, that he is a partaker of the qualifications which are necessary for his admission to a station of eminence in his SAVIOUR'S everlasting kingdom.—*Bishop Mant.*

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ON

SCOFFING

AT

R E L I G I O N .

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, L. L. D.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.—2 Peter, iii. 3.

A VERY little acquaintance with human nature will inform us, that there are few men who can patiently bear the imputation of being in the wrong; and that there is no action, how unreasonable or wicked soever it be, which those, who are guilty of it, will not attempt to vindicate, though, perhaps, by such a defence as aggravates the crime.

It is, indeed, common for men to conceal their faults, and gratify their passions in secret; and, especially when they are first initiated in vice, to make use rather of artifice and dissimulation than audaciousness and effrontery. But the arts of hypocrisy are in time exhausted, and some unhappy circumstance defeats those measures which they had laid for preventing a discovery. They are, at length, suspected, and, by that curiosity which suspicion always excites, closely pursued and openly detected. It is then too late to think of deceiving mankind by false appearances, nor does any thing remain but to avow boldly what can be no longer denied. Impudence is called in to the assistance of immorality; and the censures which cannot be escaped must be openly defied. Wickedness is in itself timorous, and naturally skulks in coverts and in darkness, but grows furious by despair, and, when it can fly no further, turns upon the pursuer.

Such is the state of a man abandoned to the indulgence of vicious inclinations. He justifies one crime by another; invents

wicked principles to support wicked practices; endeavours rather to corrupt others than own himself corrupted; and, to avoid that shame which a confession of his crimes would bring upon him, calls "evil good, and good evil, puts darkness for light, and light for darkness." He endeavours to trample upon those laws which he is known not to observe; to scoff at those truths which, if admitted, have an evident tendency to convict his whole behaviour of folly and absurdity; and, from having long neglected to obey God, rises at length into rebellion against Him.

That no man ever became abandoned at once, is an old and common observation, which, like other assertions founded on experience, receives new confirmation by length of time. A man ventures upon wickedness as upon waters with which he is unacquainted. He looks upon them with horror, and shudders at the thought of quitting the shore, and committing his life to the inconstancy of the weather; but, by degrees, the scene grows familiar, his aversion abates, and is succeeded by curiosity. He launches out with fear and caution, always anxious and apprehensive, lest his vessel should be dashed against a rock, sucked in by a quicksand, or hurried by the currents beyond sight of shore: but his fears are daily lessening, and the deep becomes less formidable. In time he loses all sense of danger, ventures out with full security, and roves without inclination to return, till he is driven into the boundless ocean, tossed about by the tempests, and at last swallowed by the waves.

Most men have, or once had, an esteem and reverence for virtue, and a contempt and abhorrence of vice; of which, whether they were impressed by nature, implanted by education, or deduced and settled by reason, it is at present of very little importance to inquire. Such these notions are, however they were originally received, as reason cannot but adopt and strengthen, and every man will freely confess that reason ought to be the rule of his conduct. Whoever, therefore, recedes, in his practice, from rules of which he allows the obligation, and suffers his passions to prevail over his opinions, feels at first a secret reluctance, is conscious of some sort of violence done to his intellectual powers: and though he will not deny himself that pleasure which is present before him, or that single gratification of his passions, he determines, or thinks he determines, that he will yield to no future temptation, that he will hereafter reject all the solicitation of his appetites, and live in such a manner as he should applaud in others, and as his own conscience should approve in himself.

Perhaps every man may recollect that this was the temper of his mind when he first permitted himself to deviate from the known paths of his duty; and that he never forsook them in the early part of his life, without a design to return to them, and persevere in them; and that, when he was tempted another time, he complied always with a tacit intention to add but this one more to his offences, and to spend the rest of his life in penitence and

obedience. Perhaps there are very many among the most profligate, who frequently still their consciences, and animate their hopes, with views of a reformation to be sincerely entered upon in some distant period of their lives, who propose to dedicate at least their last years to piety, and at some moments give way to wishes, that they may some time taste the satisfaction of a good life, and "die the death of the righteous."

But these, however given up to their desires and passions, however ignorant of their own weakness, and presumptuously confident of their natural powers, have not yet arrived at the summit of impiety, till they have learned, not only to neglect, but to insult religion; not only to be vicious, but to scoff at virtue.

This seems to be the last effect of a long continued habit of sin, the strongest evidence of a mind corrupted almost beyond hope of a recovery. Wickedness in this state seems to have extended its power from the passions to the understanding. Not only the desire of doing well is extinguished, but the discernment of good and evil obliterated and destroyed. Such is the infatuation produced by a long course of obstinate guilt.

Not only our speculations influence our practice, but our practice reciprocally influences our speculations. We not only do what we approve, but there is danger lest in time we come to approve what we do, though for no other reason but that we do it. A man is always desirous of being at peace with himself; and when he cannot reconcile his passions to his conscience, he will attempt to reconcile his conscience to his passions; he will find reason for doing what he is resolved to do, and, rather than not "walk after his own lusts," will scoff at religion.

These scoffers may be divided into two distinct classes, to be addressed in a very different manner; those whom a constant prosecution of their lusts has deluded into a real disbelief of religion, or diverted from a serious examination of it; and those who are convinced of the truth of revelation, but affect to contemn and ridicule it from motives of interest or vanity.

I shall endeavour therefore to evince,

First, The folly of scoffing at religion in those who doubt the truth of it. And,

Secondly, The wickedness of this practice in those who believe it.

First, I shall endeavour to evince the folly of scoffing at religion in those who doubt the truth of it.

Those who in reality disbelieve, or doubt of religion, however negligent they may be in their inquiries after truth, generally profess the highest reverence for it, the sincerest desire to discover it, and the strongest resolutions to adhere to it. They will frequently assert, and with good reason, that every man is valuable in proportion to his love of truth; that man enjoys the power of reason for this great end, that he may distinguish truth from false-

hood; that not to search for it is the most criminal laziness; and not to declare it, in opposition to the frowns of power or the prejudices of ignorance, the most despicable cowardice.

When they declaim on this darling subject, they seldom fail to take the opportunity of throwing out keen invectives against bigotry; bigotry, that voluntary blindness, that slavish submission to the notions of others, which shackles the power of the soul, and retards the progress of reason; that cloud which intercepts our views, and throws a shade over the light of truth.

Such is the discourse of these men; and who that hears it would not expect from them the most disinterested impartiality, the most unwearied assiduity, and the most candid and sober attention to any thing proposed as an argument upon a subject worthy of their study? Who would not imagine that they made it the grand business of their lives to carry the art of reasoning to its greatest height, to enlighten the understanding of the ignorant, by plain instructions, enforced with solid arguments, and to establish every important truth upon the most certain and unshaken principles?

There seems to be nothing more inconsistent with so philosophical a character than careless vivacity and airy levity. The talents which qualify a man for a disputant and a buffoon seem very different; and an unprejudiced person would be inclined to form contrary ideas of an argument, and a jest.

Study has been hitherto thought necessary to knowledge, and study cannot be successfully prosecuted without solitude and leisure. It might, therefore, be conceived, that this exalted sect is above the low employments and empty amusements of vulgar minds; that they avoid every thing which may interrupt their meditations or perplex their ideas; and that, therefore, whoever stands in need of their instructions, must seek them in privacies and retirements, in deserts or in cells.

But these men have discovered, it seems, a more compendious way to knowledge. They decide the most momentous questions amidst the jollity of feasts and the excesses of riot. They have found that an adversary is more easily silenced than confuted. They insult, instead of vanquishing, their antagonists; and decline the battle to hasten to the triumph.

It is an established maxim among them, that he who ridicules an opinion confutes it. For this reason they make no scruple of violating every rule of decency, and treating with the utmost contempt whatever is accounted venerable or sacred.

For this conduct they admire themselves, and go on applauding their own abilities, celebrating the victories they gain over their grave opponents, and loudly boasting their superiority to the advocates of religion.

As humility is a very necessary qualification for an examiner into religion, it may not be improper to depress the arrogance of these haughty champions, by showing with how little justice they

lay claim to victory, and how much less they deserve to be applauded than despised.

There are two circumstances which, either single or united, make any attainment estimable among men. The first is the usefulness of it to society: the other is the capacity or application necessary for acquiring it.

If we consider this art of scoffing with regard to either of these, we shall not find great reason to envy or admire it. It requires no depth of knowledge or intenseness of thought. Contracted notions, and superficial views, are sufficient for a man who is ambitious only of being the author of a jest. That man may laugh who cannot reason; and he that cannot comprehend a demonstration, may turn the terms to ridicule.

This method of controversy is indeed the general refuge of those whose idleness or incapacity disable them from producing any thing solid or convincing. They who are certain of being confuted and exposed in a sober dispute, imagine that by returning scurrility for reason, and by laughing most loudly when they have least to say, they shall shelter their ignorance from detection, and supply with impudence what they want in knowledge.

Nor will the possessors of this boasted talent of ridicule appear more to deserve respect on account of their usefulness to mankind. These gay sallies of imagination, when confined to proper subjects, and restrained within the bounds of decency, are of no further use to mankind than to divert, and can have no higher place in our esteem than any other art that terminates in mere amusement.

But when men treat serious matters ludicrously; when they study, not for truth, but for a jest; when they unite the most awful and most trifling ideas, only to tickle the imagination with the surprise of novelty, they no longer have the poor merit of diverting; they raise always either horror or contempt, and hazard their highest interest, without even the slow recompence of present applause.

That they hazard their highest interest can hardly be denied, when they determine, without the most scrupulous examination, those questions which relate to a future state; and none certainly are less likely to discuss these questions with the care which they require, than those who accustom themselves to continual levity.

The mind long vitiated with trifles, and entertained with wild and unnatural combinations of ideas, becomes in a short time unable to support the fatigue of reasoning; it is disgusted with a long succession of solemn images, and retires from serious meditation and tiresome labour to gayer fancies, and less difficult employments.

Besides, he that has practised the art of silencing others with a jest, in time learns to satisfy himself in the same manner. It becomes unnecessary to the tranquillity of his own mind to confute an objection; it is sufficient for him if he can ridicule it.

Thus he soon grows indifferent to truth or falsehood, and almost incapable of discerning one from the other. He considers eternity itself as a subject for mirth, and is equally ludicrous upon all occasions.

What delusion, what sophistry is equal to this? Men neglect to search after eternal happiness, for fear of being interrupted in their mirth. If others have been misled, they have been misled by their reverence for great authorities, or by strong prejudices of education. Such errors may be extenuated, and perhaps excused. They have, at least, something plausible to plead, and their assertors act with some show of reason: but what can the most extensive charity allege in favour of those men who, if they perish everlastingly, perish by their attachment to merriment, and their confidence in a jest?

It is astonishing that any man forbear inquiring seriously, whether there is a God; whether God is just; whether this life is the only state of existence; whether God has appointed rewards and punishments in a future state; whether he has given any laws for the regulation of our conduct here; whether he has given them by revelation; and whether the religion publicly taught carries any mark of divine appointment. These are questions which every reasonable being ought undoubtedly to consider with an attention suitable to their importance; and he, whom the consideration of eternal happiness or misery cannot awaken from his pleasing dreams, cannot prevail upon to suspend his mirth, surely ought not to despise others for dulness and stupidity.

Let it be remembered, that the nature of things is not alterable by our conduct. We cannot make truth; it is our business only to find it. No proposition can become more or less certain or important by being considered or neglected. It is to no purpose to wish, or to suppose, that to be false which is in itself true; and, therefore, to acquiesce in our own wishes and suppositions, when the matter is of eternal consequence, to believe obstinately without grounds of belief, and to determine without examination, is the last degree of folly and absurdity. It is not impossible that he who acts in this manner may obtain the approbation of madmen like himself, but he will incur the contempt of every wise man; and, what is more to be feared, amidst his security and supineness, his sallies and his flights, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh him to scorn; the LORD shall have him in derision."

Thus have I endeavoured to give a faint idea of the folly of those who scoff at religion, because they disbelieve, and, by scoffing, harden themselves in their disbelief. But I shall be yet more unable to describe in a proper manner what I am to mention in the second place:—

The wickedness of those that believe religion, and yet deride it from motives of interest or vanity.

This is a degree of guilt against which it might seem, at the first view, superfluous to preach, because it might be thought impossible that it should ever be committed; as, in ancient states, no punishment was decreed for the murderer of his father, because it was imagined to be a crime not incident to human nature. But experience taught them, and teaches us, that wickedness may swell beyond imagination, and that there are no limits to the madness of impiety.

For a man to revile and insult that God whose power he allows; to ridicule that revelation of which he believes the authority divine; to dare the vengeance of Omnipotence, and cry, "Am not I in sport?" is an infatuation incredible, a degree of madness without a name. Yet there are men who, by walking after their own lusts, and indulging their passions, have reached this stupendous height of wickedness. They have dared to teach falsehoods which they do not themselves believe, and to extinguish in others that conviction which they cannot suppress in themselves.

The motive of their proceeding is sometimes a desire of promoting their own pleasures, by procuring accomplices in vice. Man is so far formed for society, that even solitary wickedness quickly disgusts; and debauchery requires its combinations and confederacies, which, as intemperance diminishes their numbers, must be filled up with new proselytes.

Let those who practice this dreadful method of depraving the morals, and ensnaring the soul, consider what they are engaged in! Let them consider what they are promoting, and what means they are employing! Let them pause and reflect a little, before they do an injury that can never be repaired; before they take away what cannot be restored; before they corrupt the heart of their companion by perverting his opinions; before they lead him into sin; and, by destroying his reverence for religion, take away every motive to repentance, and all the means of reformation!

This is a degree of guilt before which robbery, perjury, and murder, vanish into nothing. No mischief, of which the consequences terminate in our present state, bears any proportion to the crime of decoying our brother into the broad way of eternal misery, and stopping his ears against that holy voice that recalls him to salvation.

What must be the anguish of such a man when he becomes sensible of his own crimes! How will he bear the thought of having promoted the damnation of multitudes by the propagation of known delusions! What lasting contrition, what severe repentance must be necessary for such deep and such accumulated guilt! Surely, if blood be required for blood, a soul shall be required for a soul.

There are others who deride religion for the sake of displaying their own imaginations, of following the fashion of a corrupt and licentious age, or gaining the friendship of the great or the applause of the gay. How mean must that wretch be, who can be over-

come by such temptations as these ! Yet there are men who sell that soul which God has formed for infinite felicity, defeat the great work of their redemption, and plunge into those pains which shall never end, lest they should lose the patronage of villains and praise of fools.

I suppose those whom I am now speaking of to be in themselves sufficiently convinced of the truth of the Scriptures, and may, therefore, very properly lay before them the threatenings denounced by God against their conduct.

It may be useful to them to reflect betimes on the danger of "fearing man rather than God ;" to consider that it shall avail a man nothing if he "gain the whole world and lose his own soul ;" and that whoever "shall be ashamed of his SAVIOUR before men, of him will his SAVIOUR be ashamed before his FATHER which is in heaven."

That none of us may be in the number of those unhappy persons who thus scoff at the means of grace, and relinquish the hope of glory, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through the merits of that SAVIOUR who hath brought life and immortality to light !

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THE JUDGE.

Who will be my judge? The Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the "Father hath committed all judgment," (*John* v. 22;) for it is he which is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," (*Acts* x. 42.) There is no truth more clearly set forth in Scripture than this.

In what manner will he come? His coming will be glorious. When he first entered this world, to suffer and to die for sinners, he came in great humility. He was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Far from being distinguished by worldly riches or pomp, he had no share in the things of this world. He had not even where to lay his head. He was despised, reviled, persecuted, scourged, spitted on, mocked, and crucified. But his coming to judgment will be glorious. He "shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," (*Matt.* xxv. 31.) He shall come "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," (*Matt.* xxiv. 30.) "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," (2 *Thess.* i. 7, 8; 1 *Thess.* iv. 16.)

The coming of Christ will also be sudden. Every moment which passes is bringing it nearer. Yet we are told that it will at last come when men are not expecting its arrival. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," (1 *Thess.* v. 2.) Jesus himself tells us, that "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh," (*Matt.* xxiv. 44.) Not only will it be glorious and sudden, it will also be very awful. Then will "the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," (2 *Pet.* iii. 10.) Then also all that are in the graves, the dead, small and great, "shall hear his voice and shall come forth," (*John* v. 28, 29.)

For what purpose will he come? He will come "to judge all nations," the quick and the dead, rich and poor, high and low, young and old, "for we must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ," and give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad, (2 *Cor.* v. 10.) And then will he "render to every man according to his deeds," (*Rom.* ii. 6.)

Who may abide the day of his coming? The Bible answers the question: The children of light, who shall obtain salvation by

our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 *Thess.* v. 5, 9.) Those who truly believe on him, who have trusted in him, and yielded themselves up to him as their Saviour, and whose sins are washed away in his blood, (1 *John* i. 7.) While sinners call on the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, (*Rev.* vi. 16,) his redeemed will joyfully exclaim, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," (*Isa.* xxv. 9.)

Let us but imagine the terrors of that dreadful day. The sound of the trumpet calling the dead to rise, the graves bursting, the sea giving up its dead; this earth, and all the great works of man upon it,—cities, towns, villages, buildings,—blazing; the heavens, shrivelling like a flaming scroll, and passing away with a great noise; and above us, the Son of man on his throne with all his angels. The fiery pit disclosed, "where sinners must forever dwell in darkness, fire, and chains," with the devil and his angels. All, all, then must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Each of us, "every eye shall see him," (*Rev.* i. 7;) "whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold," (*Job* xix. 27.)

And who will surround his throne? People of all countries, all ages, and all ranks. The saints of the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets; the saints of the New Testament, Simeon, who waited to see his Saviour, and, when he had seen him, departed in peace, (*Luke* ii. 29,) the "glorious company of the apostles," "the noble army of martyrs," all the saints who have entered into their rest, and those who now cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true," (*Rev.* vi. 10,) will be there, and enter into the joy of their Lord. On the other side, the sinners noticed in the Old Testament, Pharaoh, Ahab, and all the fearful long list; bloody Herod, cruel Pilate, the traitor Judas, delaying Felix, must all give an account of themselves to God, (*Rom.* xiv. 12.) Then will Jesus appear the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who shall break his enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, (*Psa.* ii. 9.) Then shall be seen the awful difference that he will make between the righteous and the wicked, "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," (*Mal.* iii. 18,) While the righteous will hear the gracious words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," (*Matt.* xxv. 34,) and will shine forth as stars in the kingdom of their Father, (*Dan.* xii. 3,) the wicked will be cast into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," (*Matt.* xxv. 41,) and will know by dreadful experience the meaning of those awful expressions, the "second death," "outer darkness," "the worm that never dieth," "the fire that is not quenched," (*Rev.* xx. 14; *Matt.* viii. 12; *Mark* ix. 44.) Awful and terrible thought! "The Lord grant unto us, that we find mercy of the Lord in that day." (2 *Tim.* i. 18.)

Let every one who reads this attend to these solemn questions,

Have you reason to think that you are a child of light? Do you believe on Jesus? Have you received and owned him for your Saviour? Have you ever heartily prayed to him to forgive you, and save you? Should the Lord come now, in what state would he find your soul? Could you humbly, yet boldly appeal to him as your God and your Saviour; as the God you serve, the Saviour you trust? Could you say to him, "I have waited for thee."

May God give us grace to consider these things, and if our hearts condemn us, let us seriously reflect on our danger, reflect on it now, while there is time. Let us search the Scriptures to become acquainted with Jesus. We must one day see him. He will then be our Judge, he now offers to be our Saviour. He now says to us, "Look unto me, and be ye saved," (*Isa. xlv. 22.*) He promises, if we come to him, to receive us graciously, and forgive us freely; to take away all our sins. "Though they be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," (*Isa. i. 18.*) How can we refuse so merciful an invitation to come and to be saved? Let us hear his voice, when "he stands at the door" of our hearts, "and knocks," let us open our hearts to him, and intreat him to enter in, and dwell with us for ever," (*Rev. iii. 20.*)

One thing more: we must do this now—To-day—To-morrow it may be too late. You may be dead by to-morrow; or, even if your life be spared, your circumstances may be far less favourable. Be assured of this, that the longer you remain in impenitence, and the oftener you harden your hearts against the invitations of mercy, the more hopeless will your state become. Remember the words of the angel to Lot: "Escape for thy life," (*Gen. xix. 17.*) "Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," (*2 Cor. vi. 2.*)

We must suppose that the coming of Christ to judgment is to be with greater terror and majesty than have yet been manifested by any of the Person of the Godhead, either in Himself or any of his creatures. If an angel who represented God, and was only to promulgate the Law, came with such terror and majesty unto Mount Sinai, as made the Hebrew people, though purified and prepared for his coming, to quake and tremble; what shall the Lord of the Law do, when He himself comes to take account of the law, to avenge the breach of it? With what terror and majesty shall He appear unto sinners, and to those who are unprepared for His reception, who are then to be all present, and judged in that last day of time!

What shall it then profit the worldlings to have rich vessels of gold and silver, curious embroideries, precious tapestries, pleasant gardens, sumptuous palaces, and all that the world now esteems, when they shall with their own eyes behold their costly palaces

burnt, their rich and curious pieces of gold melted, and their flourishing and pleasant orchards consumed, without power to preserve them or themselves? All shall burn, and with it the world, and all the memory and fame of it shall die; and that which mortal thought to be immortal, shall then end and vanish.

The rich man shall not be preserved by his wealth, nor the mighty by his power, nor the crafty by his wiles; only the just shall be freed by his virtue. None shall escape the terror of that day by fast-sailing ships or speed of horses; the sun itself shall burn, and the fire shall overtake the swiftest post. Only faith, holiness, and charity, shall defend the servant of God.

This is the end wherein all time is to determine; and this the catastrophe, so fearful unto the wicked, wherein all things temporal are to conclude. Let us therefore take heed how we use them; and that we may use them well, let us be mindful of this last day, this day of justice and calamity, this day of terror and amazement; the memory whereof will serve much for the reformation of our lives. Let us think of it, and let us fear it; for it is the most terrible of all things terrible to the unbelieving and impenitent, and the consideration most profitable and acceptable to cause in us a holy fear of God, and to induce us to turn to Him, and live. While I live, therefore, I will ever preserve in my memory this day of terror, that I may hereafter enjoy security for the whole eternity of God. Above all things, I will keep before my eyes the last of all days; and all the moments of my life I will think, and for ever think, of ETERNITY.—*Jer. Taylor.*

GREAT GOD, what do I see and hear
 The end of things created!
 The Judge of man I see appear,
 On clouds of glory seated:
 The trumpet sounds; the graves restore
 The dead which they contain'd before;
 Prepare, my soul, to meet Him.

The dead in CHRIST shall first arise
 At the last trumpet's sounding,
 Caught up to meet him in the skies;
 With joy their LORD surrounding:
 No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
 His presence sheds eternal day
 On those prepared to meet Him.

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